

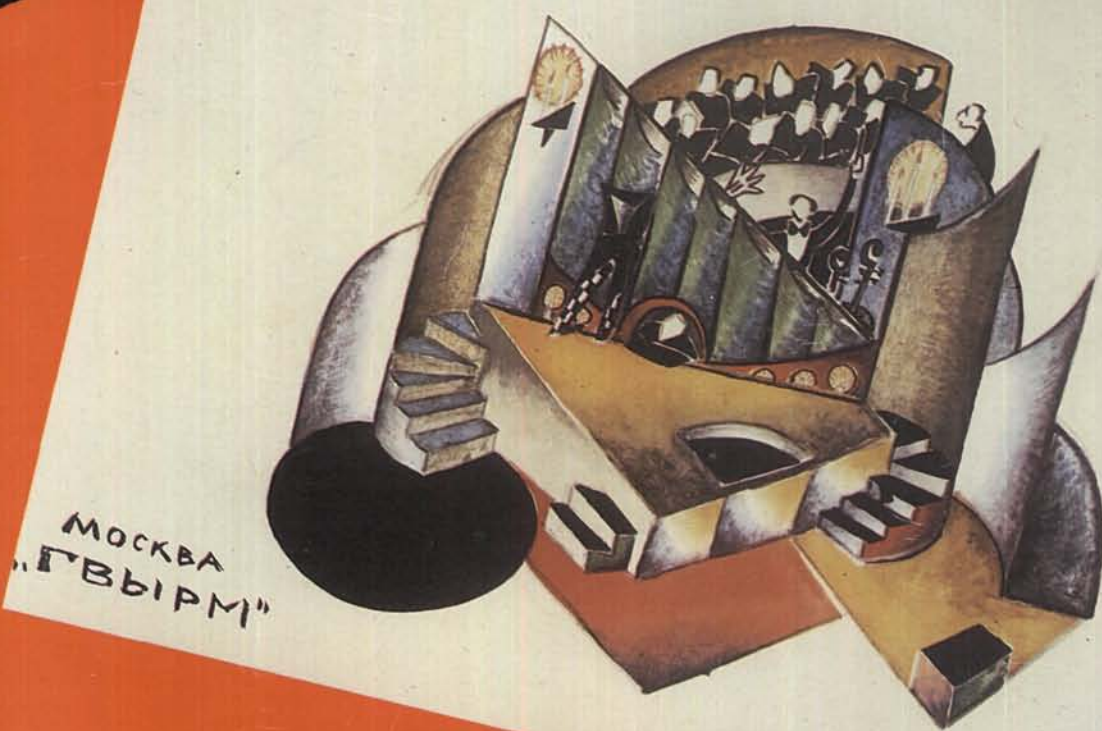
ENCOUNTERED

CURRENT AFFAIRS – LITERATURE – THE ARTS

FEBRUARY 1989

£1.50

SERGEI EISENSTEIN CONVERSATION WITH STALIN POTEMKIN & AFTER BY MARK LE FANU



GEORGE WALDEN: The Moralistic Media

ELIE KEDOURIE: Reporting Islam

CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN on Edmund Burke

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: *Solving the world's nutritional problems is one of the major challenges of the future. The new Nestlé Centre for nutrition research near Lausanne symbolizes not only our belief in tomorrow, but also our confidence that one can successfully meet this challenge. Employing 400 people, the Centre is one of the largest of its kind in the world. Here nutrition science, food technology and biological science work hand in hand, creating an atmosphere of inter-disciplinary dialogue which in turn leads to innovative achievement.*



EDITORS
Melvin J. Lasky
Richard Mayne
Anthony Hartley

EXECUTIVE PUBLISHER
Anthony Robinson

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Bryan Healing

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Jacqui Lewis

EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS
Margot Walmsley
J. C. Hall

ADVERTISEMENT DIRECTOR
Antony Pullen

PUBLISHERS' ADVERTISING
Anne Loukes

ASSISTANT TO THE PUBLISHER
Rebecca Penrose

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
Sue Walker

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Pat Savage

CHIEF ACCOUNTANT
Pat Shutler

ACCOUNTS ASSISTANT
Shirley Lewis

RECEPTION
Alison Loomes

ADVISORY BOARD
Maurice Cranston
D. J. Enright
Gerald Frost
Anthony Hartley
Leo Labedz
Edward Shils
Anthony Thwaite
George Urban
John Weightman

PUBLISHING ADVISERS
Lord Ardwick
Blouke Carus
Lord Cudlipp
Leon Levy
Julio Nunez
Julia Robinson
Jack Watmough
Gary Bogard (chairman)

COVER
David Costa

(Photograph: Eisenstein Museum, Moscow)

ENCOUNTER

FEBRUARY 1989 VOL. LXXII No. 2 ISSN 0013-7073

CONTENTS

A Conversation in the Kremlin	<i>Sergei Eisenstein, Nikolai Cherkasov</i>	3
Because of the War (story)	<i>Norman Levine</i>	7
The Moralistic Media	<i>George Walden</i>	13
Is There a Case for Terrorism?	<i>Jillian Becker</i>	19
Column	<i>M</i>	25

POEMS

Jean Hanff Korelitz 12, Dominic Fisher 18, Edward Rogerson 24, Gordon Wharton 27, Matthew Mead 28, Elizabeth Jennings 28, Carole Satyamurti 37, J. F. Hendry 43, John Loveday 56, Anna Adams 62, Adrian Blackledge 73

MEN & IDEAS

Burke's Great Melody	<i>Conor Cruise O'Brien</i>	30
----------------------	-----------------------------	----

NOTES & TOPICS

A Treacherous Quotation	<i>D. A. Longley</i>	38
The Bald & the Hairy	<i>Vladimir Voinovich</i>	41
Paris Notebook	<i>Jean-François Revel</i>	42

BOOKS & WRITERS

Writing in Images	<i>Mark Le Fanu</i>	44
Critic of France	<i>Walter Redfern</i>	49
The Passion for Wisdom	<i>Rüdiger Görner</i>	52
Books Encountered	<i>R.M.</i>	57

POINTS OF THE COMPASS

Last Days of the Emperor	<i>Brian Moeran</i>	58
--------------------------	---------------------	----

EDUCATION

The Decline of the British University	<i>Geoffrey Strickland</i>	63
---------------------------------------	----------------------------	----

DISCUSSION

Who Will Translate the Translators?	<i>Roy Harris</i>	68
-------------------------------------	-------------------	----

MEDIA

Reporting Islam	<i>Elie Kedourie</i>	74
-----------------	----------------------	----

IN THE MARGIN

Between East & West	<i>Anthony Hartley</i>	77
---------------------	------------------------	----

BOXES

Stalin as an Historian (Vladimir Kobrin) 5

AUTHORS ——— LETTERS ——— LIFE & LETTERS

67

79

81



THE GLOBAL DIGITAL HIGHWAY · THE GLOBAL DIGITAL HIGHWAY



THE GLOBAL DIGITAL HIGHWAY · THE GLOBAL DIGITAL HIGHWAY · THE GLOBAL DIGITAL HIGHWAY · THE GLOBAL DIGITAL HIGHWAY · THE GLOBAL DIGITAL HIGHWAY

THE CABLE AND WIRELESS GLOBAL DIGITAL HIGHWAY.

As a leader in worldwide telecommunications, we are one of the few companies with the resources to create a truly global communications system. Optical fibre cables will connect the world's financial and business centres, creating a digital network with the capacity to handle all data transmission, facsimile and video services.

A PIONEER IN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS.

120 years ago, the laying of the first transatlantic cable signalled the birth of Cable and Wireless and established international communications. We have been pioneers ever since.

For instance in the United Kingdom, Mercury Communications is now established as the alternative national and international telecommunications operator and 30 cities have already been linked together to form Europe's only digital network.

Now we are poised to take communications into the 1990's. The new Global Digital Highway will span both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans linking the world's major centres.

THE GLOBAL DIGITAL HIGHWAY

The first step along the Highway will be completed by mid 1989 with the installation of the first of two privately owned transatlantic optical fibre cables. The existing digital network that already serves 50 American cities will be linked to the cables, ready to provide the framework for a new system running from coast to coast.

From the west coast of the USA, the Highway will span the Pacific to Japan.

We plan to operate this second transoceanic link in conjunction with Pacific Telecom and as a partner in IDC Incorporated – the first Anglo/American/Japanese telecommunications consortium.

With the formation of IDC Incorporated, we are involved in a company set to provide alternative international telecommunications services to Japan. Services which will make Japan a vital new communications centre for the Pacific Rim – the world's fastest growing telecommunications market.

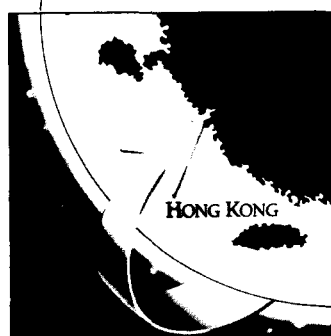
From Japan, the Global Digital Highway is planned to extend westwards to Hong Kong – a strategic location which is already a major communications hub within the Pacific area – and the gateway to China.

PROVIDING COMMUNICATIONS TO MEET GLOBAL DEMAND.

This is how the Global Digital Highway will develop. Creating the capacity to meet the demand for telecommunications between the key financial and economic centres of the world.

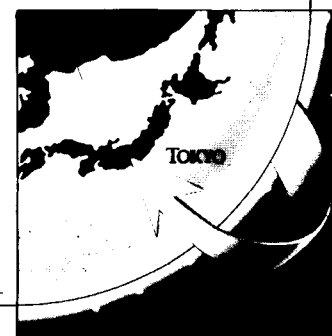
The network will become operational by 1990, ready to handle the anticipated huge increase in world communications traffic between Europe, the USA, Japan, China, and other countries on the Pacific Rim.

THE GLOBAL DIGITAL HIGHWAY · THE GLOBAL DIGITAL HIGHWAY · THE GLOBAL DIGITAL HIGHWAY · THE GLOBAL DIGITAL HIGHWAY · THE GLOBAL DIGITAL HIGHWAY



 **CABLE AND WIRELESS**
A world leader in Telecommunications

CABLE AND WIRELESS PLC, MERCURY HOUSE, THEOBALDS ROAD, LONDON WC1X 8RX



THE GLOBAL DIGITAL HIGHWAY · THE GLOBAL DIGITAL HIGHWAY · THE GLOBAL DIGITAL HIGHWAY · THE GLOBAL DIGITAL HIGHWAY · THE GLOBAL DIGITAL HIGHWAY

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sergei Eisenstein & Nikolai Cherkasov

A Conversation in the Kremlin

Stalin on “Ivan the Terrible”

25 February 1947



WE WERE TOLD to be at the Kremlin at 11 p.m. At 10:50 p.m. we walked into the reception room. At 11:00 sharp, Comrade Poskrebyshv came out and escorted us into the study. Comrades Stalin, Molotov and Zhdanov were waiting for us. We said hello and sat down at the table.

STALIN: You wrote a letter. The reply has been somewhat delayed. I thought of answering in written form but decided that we'd better have a talk. Because I am very busy and have no time, I delayed meeting you. I received your letter in November.

ZHDANOV: Yes, you received it while you were still in Sochi.

STALIN: Did you study history?

EISENSTEIN: More or less.

STALIN: More or less? I also have a little knowledge of history. You presented a false picture of the *oprichnina*. The *oprichnina* was a royal troop. As opposed to a feudal army, which could fold its tents any time and leave the battlefield—a regular army, a progressive army was formed. You depict the *oprichnina* as a kind of Ku-Klux-Klan.

EISENSTEIN: They wear white hoods, whereas our men wear black ones.

MOLOTOV: This makes no fundamental difference.

STALIN: Your Czar is irresolute, like Hamlet. Everyone prompts him instead of letting him make the decisions himself.

Czar Ivan was a great and wise ruler. If one compares him with Louis XI (have you read about Louis XI who prepared absolutism for Louis XIV?), then Ivan the Terrible was in a much higher class. Ivan the Terrible's wisdom was that

he championed the national point of view. He did not let foreigners in—he safeguarded the country against penetration by foreign influences.

In this sense, the portrayal of Ivan IV is distorted.

Peter I was also a great sovereign, but he was too liberal in relation to foreigners, opened the gates too wide and let foreign influence into the country, having allowed Russia to become Germanised. Catherine allowed this to an even greater extent. Was Alexander I's court a Russian court? Was Nicholas I's court a Russian court? No. Those were German courts.

Ivan the Terrible was the first to introduce a monopoly on foreign trade—an excellent move. Lenin was the second to introduce a monopoly.

ZHDANOV: Eisenstein's Ivan the Terrible looks like a neurasthenic.

MOLOTOV: The stress is on psychologism, on inner psychological contradictions and personal emotions.

STALIN: Historical personalities must be portrayed correctly in manner. For example, in Part One it's wrong that Ivan the Terrible gives his wife such a long kiss. In those times this was not permitted.

ZHDANOV: The picture has a Byzantine bias. Even there this was not practised.

MOLOTOV: Part Two takes place in a lot of vaults and basements. There is no noise of Moscow, no portrayal of the people. You can show conspiracies and repressions, but not exclusively.

STALIN: Ivan the Terrible was very ruthless. One can show that he was ruthless. But you must show why *it was necessary to be ruthless*. One of Ivan the Terrible's errors was that he failed to cut down five large feudal families. Had he wiped out these families, there would have been no Time of Troubles. But Ivan the Terrible executed someone and then he felt sorry and prayed for a long time. God hindered him in this matter. Czar Ivan should have been even more resolute.

MOLOTOV: Historical events must be shown in correct conceptualisation. Look what happened to Demyan Bedny's play

The Heroes. In it, Demyan Bedny mocked the adoption of Christianity in Russia, yet this was a progressive phenomenon for its historical stage.

STALIN: Of course, we are not very good Christians. But it's impossible to deny the progressive role of Christianity at a definite stage. This event was of very great importance because it marked Russia's shift toward the West, instead of toward the East.

ABOUT RELATIONS with the East, Comrade STALIN says that, having shaken off the Tartar yoke, Ivan the Terrible hastened to unite Russia so as to have a stronghold against all possible inroads by the Tartars. Astrakhan was subdued but could attack Moscow at any moment. The Crimean Tartars could, too. Demyan Bedny had a wrong view of historical perspectives. When we moved the Monument to Minin and Pozharsky closer to St Basil's Cathedral, Demyan Bedny protested and wrote me (Comrade STALIN points to himself) that monuments should be thrown out and we must forget all about Minin and Pozharsky. In reply to this letter, I called him "Ivan who doesn't remember his kith and kin". We cannot throw out history.

Further, Comrade STALIN makes several remarks about the interpretation of Ivan the Terrible's image. He says that Malyuta Skuratov was a great military leader and died the death of a hero in the war against Livonia.

In response to the idea that criticism helps and that after being criticised, Pudovkin made a good film—*Admiral*

Nakhimov—Comrade CHERKASOV said: "We are sure that what we produce won't be any worse. I have worked on Ivan the Terrible's image in the cinema and in the theatre. I fell in love with this image and believe that our remake will prove correct and authentic."

To which Comrade STALIN replied: "Well, let's try."

CHERKASOV: I am sure that the remade version will be a success.

Then Comrade STALIN said: "May God let us have a New Year every day" (laughs).

EISENSTEIN asks whether there will be any special instructions in relation to the film.

Comrade STALIN replies: "I am giving you not instructions, but the reactions of a spectator."

Comrade ZHDANOV says that Eisenstein is easily carried away by shadows. Even Ivan the Terrible's beard distracts from the action. The Czar raises his head too often so that his beard will be seen.

EISENSTEIN promises to shorten the Czar's beard in future.

Comrade STALIN, referring to actors in Part One of *Ivan the Terrible*, says: "Kurbsky is magnificent. Staritsky (actor Kadochnikov) is very good. He catches flies very well. So does the future Czar, but he catches flies with his hands. Such details must be included. They reflect a person's essence."

Comrade STALIN says: "Well, the question is settled. Give Comrades Cherkasov and Eisenstein the chance to complete the concept and the film."

And he adds: "Tell Bolshakov [Chairman of the Film Committee] about this."

THIS DOCUMENT continues our series of extracts from the Soviet press, which includes Fyodor Burlatsky's "Why Khrushchev Failed" (May 1988) and "Brezhnev's Words" (January 1989).

The transcript of this conversation between Eisenstein and Stalin—published for the first time in the English and German editions of "Moscow News" weekly (No. 32, 1988)—was discovered in the Soviet archives by Rem Trofimov and Elvira Dreiband while they were carrying out research for the first study of the film-maker ever to appear in the USSR. Their book was published (in Latvian) in 1970. "Regrettably", says Trofimov in a short introduction, "at that time we were unable to use the transcript and some other materials. . . ."

"Production of 'Que Viva Mexico' [writes Trofimov] was stopped in 1931-32. Stalin cabled the American writer Upton Sinclair that Eisenstein is a 'defector and an apostate to his country'. It was only Sinclair's interference—the writer managed to persuade Stalin to change his mind—that opened the way back home for Eisenstein.

Eisenstein co-wrote the second draft of the script for 'Bezhin Meadow' with Isaac Babel, who soon fell victim to repressive measures. The film was never released and was eventually destroyed.

When Eisenstein began work on his film about Ivan IV, he relied on the the popular concept of a 'great sovereign' as one whose progressiveness justifies his repressions and personal brutality. Part One was filmed during the grim days of World War II, and the picture's patriotic spirit in a way atoned for a certain simplifica-

tion of the truth. Stalin liked the film, and it was honoured with a Stalin Prize, First Class. . . .

However, the more Eisenstein worked on the second part of the film, the clearer it became that it would be impossible to avoid condemning the Czar's tyranny and exposing his meaningless and brutal crimes. The Ministry of Cinematography was frightened by the finished version. Eisenstein's portrayal of repressions and the loneliness of the tyrant who destroyed all his comrades-in-arms evoked sinister analogies. . . ."

"IVAN THE TERRIBLE" had been filmed in Alma-Ata, in Soviet Central Asia, during a period of just over a year, from April 1943 to June 1944. Part One was edited, and released to acclaim, in January 1945; from October to December that year Eisenstein edited Part Two. Early in 1946, however, he suffered his first heart attack. In September the Central Committee of the CPSU viewed Part Two and made heavy criticisms. Still weak, but recovering, Eisenstein wrote to Stalin in November requesting an interview, and asking that he be allowed to continue his work on the film. With Nikolai Cherkasov (the actor who played Ivan—as, in 1938, he had played Alexander Nevsky), Eisenstein was summoned to the Kremlin on 25 February 1947. They made this transcript of the events immediately after the meeting ended.

Eisenstein died a year later. Part Two of "Ivan the Terrible" was held back from release until, in February 1958—the tenth anniversary of Eisenstein's death—it was presented to the Soviet audience, apparently without cuts.

Stalin as an Historian



HISTORIANS have long known the gist of this famous conversation from Nikolai Cherkasov's memoirs. But the text itself adds some new touches to the picture of the midnight conference at which Stalin, Molotov and Zhdanov discussed Eisenstein's "Ivan the Terrible" with Eisenstein and Cherkasov who starred in the film.

How fortunate that this transcript was never published during Stalin's lifetime when the panegyric view reigned supreme. Historians were compelled to quote and substantiate all sorts of statements by Stalin that flew in the face of the most elementary facts. . . . For instance, Stalin confused the mercenary landsknecht troops (practically non-existent in Russia) who sometimes "folded their tents and left the battlefield" with the Russian nobility's brave volunteer corps which always obeyed the orders of the great princes and then the Czar. And the oprichnina (Ivan IV's special élite) bore no resemblance to a regular army: the feudal lords simply placed themselves at the "sovereign's disposal". In 1571, the oprichniki, weighed down by the riches they had plundered in Novgorod, failed to report to their units. According to the history of the oprichnina, this helped the Crimean khan inflict his crushing defeat on Russia.

STALIN'S ASSERTION that Ivan the Terrible "did not let foreigners into his country" is wrong. Foreign specialists were not allowed to enter Russia by its enemies who wanted to weaken the country. For instance, in 1548, Hans Schlitte, on orders from Ivan IV, recruited more than 100 craftsmen of various trades from Germany. But in Lübeck the local magistrate held them up and imprisoned Schlitte himself. This kind of service was requested from the city authorities by the Livonian Order.

Stalin defended his policy: it was he, after all, who closed Peter the Great's "window on to Europe". Inasmuch as culture, science and technology cannot develop in isolation, the country paid for Stalin's fear of "perfidious foreigners" and is still lagging behind in many fields.

STALIN REPEATED the widespread (and still current) fabrications about "German domination" in the 18th and 19th centuries. A queer kind of domination it was. In this connection, Stalin mentioned Biron, Benkendorf, Dubbelt, Benigsen. . . . But then Barclay de Tolly (a Germanised Scot) was a great Russian army leader, Krusenstern and Belinshausen were great Russian travellers, Pestel and Kyukhelbeker were ardent Russian revolutionaries, Dahl and Vostokov (whose real name was Osteneck) were great Russian philologists. . . . Of course, there were always many "Germans" (including Swedes, Danes and Dutch) at the Russian court. Many were noblemen from the Baltic gubernias, that is, subjects of the Russian emperor just like the Russian, Georgian or Tartar noblemen. Some were of foreign origin, and they were relied upon especially willingly: having no roots in Russia, they served not it, but the Czar personally, and were therefore more convenient. Under Czar Ivan, the percentage of foreigners among the oprichniki was higher than among the Russian nobility generally.

ACCORDING TO Stalin, Ivan the Terrible introduced a state monopoly on foreign trade in Russia. The point here is not only the blasphemous comparison with Lenin. A state monopoly did not exist and could not exist under feudalism. Who knows where Stalin, who admitted knowing "little" history, got this surprising fact. . . .

Ivan the Terrible, according to Stalin, "having shaken off the Tartar yoke, hastened to unite Russia so as to have a stronghold against all possible inroads by the Tartars". But it was his grandfather, Ivan III, who shook off the Orda yoke 50-odd years before the birth of Ivan IV, by which time Russia had already been united into a single state.

Stalin said Ivan the Terrible's mistake was that "he failed to cut down five large feudal families". Why five? Which five? After all, dozens of Boyar families survived the oprichnina, and the latter used the services of many noble aristocrats—the Princes Trubetskoi, Khovansky, Pronsky, Sitsky. . . .

Where did this pseudo-erudition come from? I once put this question in an article. A reader responded: wasn't Stalin's assertion an erroneous conclusion drawn from A. K. Tolstoy's "Tsar Fyodor Ioannovich", staged at the Moscow Art Theatre? In it Boyar Nikita Romanovich Yuryev says that Czar Ivan "on his deathbed bequeathed Russia to five boyars". Evidently, this production was the source of Stalin's knowledge of 16th-century Russian history.

IT'S NOT JUST THAT factual errors revealed Stalin's ignorance. To extol Ivan the Terrible—one of the cruellest tyrants ever, responsible for the brutal executions of tens of thousands of innocent people—is immoral. Ivan IV's despotic autocracy slowed the country's development and consolidated serfdom in its most brutal form. Stalin's words that "Czar Ivan was a great and wise ruler" were a lie.

Any resemblances between Ivan the Terrible's cult and Stalin's cult were not lost on Stalin. Stalin knew what he was doing. Ivan IV's terror justified Stalin's own terror. Stalin purposefully created a perverted system of values in which the end justified the means, in which morality was seen as naive pre-scientific thinking.

In the late 1930s, national-historical nihilism (which can be explained but not justified) was replaced by another extreme: pompous biographies and films about czars, princes and military leaders. The eulogies to Ivan the Terrible were just one, though a morally revolting, case of Stalin's desire to glorify "strong personalities". The object was to convince people that their happiness depended on the will of a wise statesman leading the country to prosperity while frustrating the machinations of loathsome foreigners and traitors from the "upper echelons" and brushing aside the sceptic or spineless people in his way. This "historical concept" coincided with the interests of Stalin's one-man rule.

THEY SAY THAT historical parallels are out of place. But the parallel between Stalin and Ivan the Terrible was suggested by Stalin himself. He saw to it that his place in history should be next to that of Czar Ivan.

Professor Vladimir Kobrin

DSc (History)

in MOSCOW NEWS

Comrade CHERKASOV asks about some details in the film and about the Czar's outer appearance.

STALIN: His appearance is correct, it mustn't be changed. Ivan the Terrible's outer appearance is good.

CHERKASOV: Can the scene of Staritsky's assassination be kept in the film?

STALIN: It can be kept. There were assassinations.

CHERKASOV: In our script there is a scene where Malyuta Skuratov strangles Metropolitan Filip. Should this scene be kept?

STALIN: This scene must be left in. It is historically correct.

MOLOTOV SAYS THAT repressive measures can be shown, but we must show why they were enforced. For this we must show state activities—not only scenes in basements and enclosed places but wise state activities.

CHERKASOV expresses his considerations about the changes in the script.

STALIN asks how the film will end. "What is the best way—to make another two pictures, that is, Parts Two and Three, or how are we going to do it?"

STALIN: What are you going to end the film with?

CHERKASOV says that the film will end with the route of Livonia, the heroic death of Malyuta Skuratov, and the march towards the sea, where Ivan the Terrible stands by the shore surrounded by his troops, and says: "We stand on the seas, and stand we shall."

STALIN: That's how it happened. And even a little more.

CHERKASOV ASKS WHETHER the outlines of the future script should be shown for approval to the Politburo.

STALIN replies: "The script needn't be agreed upon, sort it out yourselves. It is hard to judge from a script, it is easier to speak about a finished work."

Addressing MOLOTOV: "You are, of course, very eager to read the script?"

MOLOTOV: No. I work in a somewhat different field. Let Bolshakov read it.

EISENSTEIN SAYS THAT it would be good if he wasn't hurried with the production of this film.

This remark is animatedly commented on by everyone. Comrade STALIN says: "You shouldn't be in a hurry anyway. We won't release hastily made films. Repin worked on his *Zaporozhtsy* for eleven years."

All those present arrive at the conclusion that really good films can be made only after a lot of work.

In connection with the film *Ivan the Terrible*, Comrade

STALIN says that if one-and-a-half or two years, even three years are needed to produce the film, take them so that the picture will be done well, "sculpturally".

Comrade STALIN says: "We must raise quality now. May there be fewer films but of higher quality."

He says that Tselikovskaya is good in other roles. She plays well, but she is a ballerina.

We say that in Alma-Ata it was impossible to get another actress from Moscow.

Comrade STALIN says that a director must be adamant and demand whatever he needs, whereas our directors yielded too easily.

Comrade EISENSTEIN says they spent two years looking for Anastasiya.

Comrade STALIN points out that actor Zharov treated his role in *Ivan the Terrible* incorrectly, unseriously. He is not a serious military leader.

ZHDANOV: He's not Malyuta Skuratov, but some spineless type.

COMRADE STALIN SAYS that Ivan the Terrible was a more national, more prudent czar. He didn't let foreign influences into Russia. But "Petrukha [Peter the Great] flung the gates wide open into Europe and let in too many foreigners."

The conversation ends with Comrade STALIN wishing success and saying: "May God help you."

We shake hands and depart. The talk ends at ten minutes past midnight.

Postscript

COMRADE ZHDANOV said that there was too much abuse of religious rituals in the film.

Comrade MOLOTOV said that this produces a touch of mysticism which mustn't be so heavily stressed.

Comrade ZHDANOV adds that the scene at the cathedral, where the act of solicitation takes place, is too broad and distracts attention.

Comrade STALIN says that the *oprichniks* during their dances look like cannibals and remind one of Phoenicians and Babylonians.

When Comrade CHERKASOV said that he had worked on Ivan the Terrible's image both in the cinema and in the theatre, Comrade ZHDANOV said: "I have reigned quietly for six years now."

Comrade CHERKASOV reaches for a box of cigarettes and asks Comrade Stalin: "May I smoke?"

Comrade STALIN says: "Smoking doesn't seem to be forbidden. Perhaps we shall vote?"—and he allows smoking.

When it was said that the script needn't be submitted for approval, Comrade MOLOTOV said: "The script needn't be submitted for approval, especially since Comrade Eisenstein has probably thought through everything connected with Ivan the Terrible during this time."

Stalin inquires about Eisenstein's heart problem and maintains that he looks very well.

*Recorded by: Eisenstein
Cherkasov*

Norman Levine

Because of the War

I LEFT Canada in 1949 and went to England because of the eighteen months I'd lived there during the War. I met my wife because of the War. She was evacuated to Cornwall from London. She also had a weakness for displaced Europeans who had to leave their country. And I am European—one generation removed. For almost 27 years we were happily married, raised a family, then she became ill and died.

Soon after that the writing stopped. I'd go out in the morning to get *The Times*, do shopping, cook something to eat. Then go for long walks. Or I would sit in the front room, look out of the window, and listen to the wind, the clock, the gulls. The evenings were the most difficult.

After seven months, I realised I couldn't go on like this. So I came back to Canada, to Toronto. A city I had never lived in before. I came in mid-February (two months before a new book was to be published . . . it was the last thing I read to her in manuscript). I like Canadian winters. But after two weeks in Toronto I didn't want to go out.

I would only leave my room to walk to the corner store and buy two packs of cigarillos. And mail my letters. Then I would go to Ziggy's supermarket. The neat piles of fruit and vegetables. Such lovely colours. And in sizes I wasn't used to. The cheeses from all over. The different bread, bagels, salami, hot dogs—what abundance. Equipped with this I stayed inside, cooked, listened to the radio, made cups of coffee, smoked the cigarillos, and wrote letters to England, Holland, and Switzerland. I like a foreign city. But there was something here that made me uneasy every time I went out.

My publisher had got me this apartment. A large, bare room on the seventh floor in the centre of Toronto. It looked shabby from the outside. But one wall was all glass. I watched passenger jets, high-rise office buildings, clusters of bare trees, and some magnificent sunsets. It was even more impressive at night. The lights inside the glass buildings were left on. They made the city look wealthy, full of glitter, like tall passenger liners anchored close together in the dark.

On my first day, I went to a bank on Bloor Street to open an account. A small, grey-haired woman with glasses came to the counter: "What is your job?"

I told her.

She lowered her head and mumbled.

"Unemployed?"

"No."

As she wrote my name, address, and other particulars, I could see she didn't believe I was in work. I wondered why. I had on a new winter coat. I was wearing a tie, a clean shirt, a dark suit. I had good shoes.

I walked to the Eaton Centre. From the outside it reminded me of Kew Gardens—one greenhouse above another. And seeing people moving sideways on the escalators—like something from *Things to Come*.

I had come to buy a telephone. And when I came out, with the telephone, I was on a frozen side-street. I didn't know where north was. I asked a woman in a fur coat.

"Don't talk to me", she shouted angrily, waving her hand. "Go away, go away—just walk along. . . ."

I did walk along. The panhandlers kept asking: "Can you spare a quarter?" "Any change sir?" Then told me to have a good day or else to take care. The cold wind blew loose newspapers down Yonge Street. It looked shabby and raw.

But inside it was different.

I'd come in from the cold to this well-heated building. Though the room was warm the air was dry. The toothbrush I left wet at night was like chalk next morning. And when I left out a piece of sliced bread. . . . In the morning I woke to a high-pitched sound. It was the dry bread drying even more.

IN THOSE FIRST weeks I went for walks. And discovered a large Chinese section, a Portuguese, Italian, Polish, Jewish, Greek . . . with their restaurants, bakeries, butchers, bookstores and banks.

On a cold morning I walked into a district of large houses, wide lawns, a small park. Icicles were hanging from the roofs. And on the lawns the snow had a frozen crust. It was garbage day. The garbage cans, and the tied black-green plastic bags, were on the snow at the edge of the lawns. In the road steam was rising from the manholes.

Because of the ice I was walking slowly through the park when I saw a red bird fly to a young tree. This small, red bird in the frozen landscape looked exotic. I was watching this bird when three large dogs appeared. They attacked the garbage cans, ripped the plastic bags, and foraged. They did this, from lawn to frozen lawn, without making a sound. Then went away leaving garbage scattered and exposed.

Some days I gave myself destinations.

One afternoon I decided to walk to the Art Gallery of Ontario. At a busy intersection I had to wait for the lights to change. I looked up and saw a black squirrel on a telephone wire, slowly crossing above the crowded street. No one else seemed to take any notice.

Because I saw the squirrel cross safely and because the sun was shining, I said to the man waiting beside me.

"Isn't this a lovely day?"

"You too", he replied.

LATE ON A Saturday, I bought a paperback of *Heart of Darkness*. Then walked back through fresh snow to the apartment. As the elevator started it began to vibrate. At the top it stopped. The door remained shut. I pressed number 7 button again. It went to the bottom. And stopped. The elevator door still wouldn't open. I tried all the buttons, the switches. Nothing happened except the lights went out. It was then that I realised I was trapped.

I began to call out.

I don't know how long I was there. The air had become stale. I thought: how awkward it will be if I die here. Finally someone did hear me.

"OK fellah", I could hear him on the other side. "Don't worry. I'll get the fire department. They will have you out in a matter of minutes."

And they did. They forced the door open. I was at the bottom of the shaft. And climbed out into the light and the cold air.

That's how I met Nick the superintendent of the apartment. He was standing with the firemen. He looked distressed. "Not my fault. I start work yesterday. I no work weekend. Not my fault."

"Of course it's not your fault", I said.

After that Nick and I talked whenever we saw each other. His wife had left him. He had custody of their son. When he left for school in the morning, I watched them wave and smile until the boy finally turned the corner. Nick told me he was Yugoslavian. That he grew up with the Germans in his country.

"I see people die. I see people hang. These things I cannot forget. I work for the two sisters. They need to fix here plenty. But they no like to spend money."

The two sisters came from France after the War and spoke English with a French accent. They owned the apartment and ran it from an office on the second floor. Every morning—Monday to Friday at ten—I'd go down to see if I had any mail. And be greeted by smiles and good mornings from one of the sisters. "Please sit down. A cup of coffee?"

Edith, the older one, despite her straight grey hair, looked the younger. She was tall, slim, with dark eyes deeply set. She had a long, intelligent face. But there was something awkward about her presence. Both sisters were generous, sociable. And both were elegantly dressed.

"These shoes", Edith said, stepping out of one and going easily back into it. "I went to Paris to get them."

"I, too, go to Paris for my clothes", said Miriam.

She was stocky; blue eyes, black hair, a round face. She smiled a lot and liked to talk. But often when she started to tell a story she would forget the ending and stop in mid-sentence with a startled look.

Edith was separated with two children. Miriam was divorced with two children. They thought I was too much on my own.

"You won't meet people staying in", Miriam said, "or going for walks by yourself. Go to dances. Go to political meetings. Join something." She forgot what she was going to say. Then, in a flat voice, said. "In this business you can tell a lot about a person from their luggage."

AT THE END of March I met Mrs Kronick. She lived on the floor below. A small Jewish woman, 78, a widow. She came with her husband from Poland after World War I. He died ten years ago. She had a son, a doctor, in Vancouver. But he rarely came to see her. Mrs Kronick was still a striking woman, very independent. And she looked after herself. Every time I saw her she wore a different hat. But she couldn't tolerate the cold. I was in the lobby, waiting for the elevator, when she walked in from the outside. Her face was pale, her eyes watering.

"It's a Garden of Eden", she said trying to catch her breath. "A Garden of Eden."

"What have you been doing, Mrs Kronick?"

She was silent. Then quietly said. "Sewing shrouds."

"It's an honour", she added quickly. "Not everyone gets asked."

Next morning, Edith knocked on the door of my apartment. "Did you see what they did in the elevator?"

"No."

"Come, I'll show you."

On the inside of the elevator I saw, scratched on the metal, a badly drawn swastika. And on the inside of the elevator door: *Kill Jews*.

"They don't like us", she said.

Edith's student-daughter told me. "My mother wears dresses from Dior. She has a woman to help her in the house. But she can't throw away a small piece of cheese. She will wrap it up and save it. She also saves brown paper bags that she gets from shopping—to use again. It's because of what happened to her in the War."

Both sisters were delighted with Nick.

"He is so much better than the last one", Miriam said. "He never stops working."

"The last one was too old", said Edith. "He came from the Ukraine. After 40 years here—he was still in the Ukraine."

"You must come and meet our friend Henry",

Miriam said. "He is very intelligent. Come for brunch next Sunday." And wrote an address and drew a simple map. "Do you think you will be able to find your way?"

"In the War", I said, "I found my way to Leipzig."

ON SUNDAY I took the subway north and travelled as far as it could go. Then began to walk. I had not seen a Canadian spring in 30 years and I had forgotten how colourful the trees were. The flowering crab-apple's pink and crimson; the horse chestnut with its miniature white Christmas trees. And all kinds of maples.

I was walking through a suburb, several cars were beside each house, but no sidewalks.

I walked on the road.

A car drove up, on the opposite side, and stopped. A man got out. He stared at me. Perhaps because I was walking. As I came opposite I called out. "Why didn't they build sidewalks?"

"I'll only be a minute", he said nervously. And ran inside the nearest house.

"This is Hannah", Miriam said.

And I was introduced to a handsome woman in her late fifties; thinning red hair, brown eyes, high cheekbones, a pleasant face but there was a certain arrogance.

The man opposite was Henry, a Professor of Russian at the university. He was wearing jeans and a blue sports-shirt. I felt overdressed in a grey suit. Miriam had on an expensive-looking sack dress in pastel colours. Edith had gone to New York for the weekend. In the other room the table was set.

We were sitting in the adjoining room. A blue Chagall of flowers was on the wall. And faded photographs of young women with attractive faces in old-fashioned clothes.

Henry was around my age. He spoke English with an accent. I told him that he looked very fit.

"I go jogging every morning. I play tennis. I swim. You realise you are the only Canadian here. Hannah comes from Poland. She came just after the War. I came a few years later. What Russian writers do you like?"

"Chekhov and Turgenev."

He smiled. "And what modern ones?"

"Babel, Mandelstam, Akhmatova."

"Yes", he said, and kept smiling.

I felt my credentials were being examined.

"I have not long come back from Moscow", he said.

"The status of a writer in Russia today is determined if he is allowed to visit the West. It is the highest accolade. It is higher than getting your book published."

And I remembered a Russian writer who came to see me in England. He was hitch-hiking. And it was pouring with rain.

"What are you doing?" I asked him.

"Right now, I'm doing an article on suicide in Dostoevsky. Then I will lecture on it."

We went to the other room and sat around the table. In front of each plate there were wine glasses and tall, thin glasses with a yellow rose in each.

Miriam came in with a platter of bagels and croissants.

"Don't let them get cold", she called out, "they are delicious."

I sat next to Hannah. She told me she was leaving the next day for Israel. "I know a lot of people but I don't like staying with friends or relatives. I will stay in a hotel. My mother told me: Guests and fish stink after three days."

Miriam poured wine into the glasses.

"Why", Hannah asked, "is it so difficult at our age to find another person?"

"Once you have been married", Henry said, "when you meet someone who has also been married, you are both carrying trailers with you. It is this that makes it difficult."

"But people do marry again", Miriam said.

Then Hannah told us how someone she knew got out from Eastern Europe. "He was running across the border when he heard a whistle. He didn't turn around. He kept running. Then he heard the whistle again. He kept running. He expected shots. When he got to the other side he heard the whistle again. And saw it was a bird."

Hannah took a croissant.

"I don't know why", she said, "but people from Europe that I meet in Canada seem to be smaller. I don't mean in size."

"Because in Europe", Henry said, "things are small and intimate, therefore the importance of a person is exaggerated. And over there people talk better."

Miriam brought in ice-cream with a hot chocolate sauce. Then waited until she had everyone's attention. "Today", she said with a smile, "I would like us to talk about happiness."

"You cannot generalise about happiness", Henry said. "What is true for one person is not true for another."

"With the truth you can go around the world", Hannah said. "My mother told me that."

"What is happiness for you?" Miriam asked.

"Moments", I said. "You're lucky when they come."

"For me", said Miriam, "It is getting to know another person."

"But Miriam, don't you agree", I said, "that it is impossible, really, to know anyone else at all. At the most it is just speculation."

"It's living with another person", Hannah said. "That's what people can't do without. Once you've had that you want it again."

"On a visit to a mental hospital", I said, "I met a patient. She had been in there a long time. She was in there because she was always happy. If someone she liked died, she laughed."

Miriam suddenly stood up. "Such a nice day", she smiled. "Why don't we go for a walk?" So we did, the

four of us. We walked on the road in the sunshine. Then Hannah said she had to leave as she had to pack. And Henry became restless. He said to me: "Can I drive you to where you live?"

When he had gone to get the car Miriam said, "Henry must be lonely. He is always the last one to leave a party."

THE BOOK came out and the publisher arranged a promotion tour. Everywhere I was taken to be interviewed, there was a young rabbi ahead of me. He was being interviewed because he claimed to be "an authority on Death". There was also a singer making the same tour. In Vancouver she said, I love Vancouver. In Calgary, I love Calgary. I love Ottawa, I love Montreal . . . it's beautiful, beautiful. A man from the States said: "I fell in love with Canada. I changed my nationality. I'm going to die here." People were going around saying "I . . . I . . . I . . ." At the end of the week, I felt I had given enough radio and TV interviews to satisfy a minor Head of State. But when an article appeared in the *Globe*, I had a phone call.

"Do you remember Archie Carter from McGill?"

"Of course", I said, recognising his voice and seeing a tall man with dark, straight hair, thin lips, a sharp nose, a sharp jaw. He used to be an athlete, then something happened for he had a limp. In our last year at McGill, Archie Carter started a small recording business. He got me to interview visitors as if they were visiting celebrities. Then they would buy the record to take home. In return, Archie let me make recordings of the poems of Thomas Hardy.

"Can you come and see me. Or are you busy?"

"Of course I'll come."

"Today?"

"Yes."

He gave me his address.

It brought me to an expensive high-rise opposite a grove of young birches. A doorman, his war medals on a pale blue uniform, saluted me.

I pressed the button outside Archie's door. He called out. "Prepare yourself for a shock."

"I'm not the same either", I shouted back. He was bald. He had put on weight. All those sharp features were gone. Only his voice was the same. And I wondered what he was seeing in my face.

We shook hands. He led me into a room with a glass wall overlooking the birches. He limped more than I remembered.

"What would you like to drink? I only have Italian wine. But it's a good one."

He came back from the kitchen with two glasses of red wine. We drank in silence.

"I have three daughters", I said. "When they were small a friend from London, a painter, would come to see us once a year. When he arrived he would give the three of them five pounds in separate envelopes. The

last time he came he only had two envelopes. He had forgotten the youngest. So he quickly asked me for an envelope and a piece of paper. As I went to get them the youngest ran into another room. I could hear her crying. So I went in to tell her that people often forget. . . . But the tears were trickling down her face. And she was sobbing. *He's got old. He's got old.*"

"I'm not a failure", Archie said.

"In the end, Archie, we're all failures."

"Oh, I don't know about that. Do you like the wine?"

"Yes."

"I'm in love with Italy", he said. "The food, the climate. Everything. I go there every two years. . . . I got this foot in Italy. I was leading my company. A mortar bomb hit me. They had to remove the ankle."

"What happened after McGill?"

"I taught English for a while. Then I began to paint. I'll show you the paintings later." He paused. "Of course, I'm mad." And paused again to see what I would say. I said nothing. "When it's bad it's just boring. It was the pain from the wound that brought it on. The first time was in the hospital ship going back from Italy to England. The second time was 15 years ago."

"What happened. . . ?"

He hesitated. "It's because I have an economic theory that I believe will cure the world's economic problems." He hesitated again and smiled. He had a pleasant smile. "I believe we wouldn't have inflation or unemployment or high prices . . . things would be more abundant and we would be a lot happier . . . if people didn't *gyp* one another."

"Did they put you into a mental hospital for that?"

"I went to Lakefield", he said, "before McGill. Some of my friends are ambassadors—people like that—scattered all over. I called up Cairo, Amsterdam, London—and told them about this theory."

"That still doesn't seem bad enough to be put away."

"But I called them at two in the morning. Some of them became concerned and called the police. It was the police who brought me in . . . I thought at this point I was a genius. The hospital I was in was full of people who thought they were geniuses."

He filled the glasses with more wine.

"A nurse in the hospital tried to make me pee. She got a jug full of water and emptied it into an empty jug. So I could see and hear it. She kept repeating this. I still couldn't go. But the other patients, who had been watching, all wet their beds.

I have invented a word-game that I intend to put on the market. I still think I'm not a failure you know. But I mustn't forget. I must call this number." And he took out an envelope. And dialled very determinedly. "There is a studio going. And I must get this woman before she lets it to someone else."

He let the phone ring a long time before he hung up.

"What was I saying?"

"What happened after you came out of hospital?"

"I began to paint. My shrink quite likes them." He

brought several small canvases from his bedroom. They were gentle landscapes of fields and trees by a river.

"What do you think?"

"I like the colours."

"I'd better phone that woman or else that studio will go. And I need a studio."

He dialled. No response.

"Remind me to try again."

"Yes", I said.

"It's good you are in Toronto. We have lots to talk about."

"I'm going to England", I said.

He looked disappointed.

"But I'm coming back."

I got up. "I'll ring when I get back."

"Fine. I'd better call that woman again."

He took out the envelope. We shook hands. And I left him dialling the number.

ON THE WAY back I saw Mrs Kronick.

"What have you been doing?" I asked.

"I was walking down Yonge Street", she said, "and I thought of the people I knew who are dead. What have I done with my life?"

I didn't know what to answer.

"You have a son", I said.

"Yes", she said gently. "That's what I have done with my life."

THE TWO SISTERS continued to ask me to small parties that they arranged for people separated or divorced. But I met Helen in the supermarket. I couldn't find the roasted peanuts in their shells. She was standing near by. I asked her. And she walked over to show me where they were.

She was tall. Light blue eyes, a small fine nose, a small mouth, colour in her cheeks, short blonde hair with a fringe. She smiled easily and had a pleasant voice. Because I detected a trace of an English accent in it I said.

"Where in England are you from?"

"Devon—from Exeter."

"How long have you been here?"

"Thirty-four years."

"I've not long come from England."

The next time I saw her was in a small cemetery. I was coming from my publisher. She was arranging flowers by a stone. "I don't come here often", she said. "It's my husband's birthday."

"Shall we go and have some coffee?"

"My car is here", she said. "Why don't we go home."

There were oil paintings on the wall, books, and black and white photographs of a handsome-looking man.

"He was a very private person", she said. "It's

almost four years. He had come back from a business trip when he had a heart attack."

She made me a cheese and tomato sandwich.

"I met Jimmy during the War. He was with the RCAF. We got married when the War was over and he brought me to Toronto. Then Jimmy's father died. And he had to run the family business. We had a very good marriage for almost 30 years."

Then she told me about her early life in England. How she was brought up by two grandmothers. The one in the city ran a theatre. The other, in the country, was a farmer's wife.

"Why don't you write it down", I said. "It would make a good book."

"I wouldn't know how to go about it."

"Talk into a tape-recorder."

"I can talk to you", she said. "Leave me a photograph. That will help."

"No. I'll come up."

That's how it started. Twice a week I would leave the apartment and go there in the late afternoon. She would give me a drink. And talk into the tape. And I would ask her questions and she would answer. Then she would give me dinner. And do another hour of talking into the tape.

One evening there was a thunderstorm.

"Why not stay the night", she said. "There's a bed in the spare room or you can sleep with me."

As I got into bed, she said.

"I bruise easily."

Later, she said. "I wanted you to know that you had a choice."

Did I have a choice, I wondered.

It was very pleasant having breakfast together. Then walking, in the early morning, down Yonge Street.

After two weeks Helen said. "Why don't you move in here. One room could be your study and where you work."

"I'll have to go to England first and settle things. Then I'll come back."

"The sooner the better", she said.

THE TWO SISTERS decided to buy a small coffee and cake store for their children. But the children were hardly there. Only Edith and Miriam. And they seemed to be enjoying themselves. As I came in Edith said. "You must have a croissant. They are the best in Toronto. . . . Did you know Nick will be leaving us?"

"No", I said. "But why. . . ."

"He takes too many days off. He doesn't do his work."

Miriam came in. "You're just the person I want to see. We are having a small party on Saturday night. There will be some interesting people. Henry will be there. . . ."

"I have come to say goodbye."

"I don't like goodbyes", said Edith.

"Ella Fitzgerald used to sing", I said,

*Every time we say goodbye
I die, a little.*

*Every time we say goodbye
I wonder why, a little.*

"That's Lamartine", Edith said. "*Chaque fois qu'on se dit, au revoir, Je meurs un peu*—Imagine being in a store like this in Toronto and quoting Lamartine."

"I'm sure that in small stores in Toronto—Czechs are quoting from Czech writers. Italians, Hungarians, are doing the same. The Portuguese here are quoting from Portuguese poets. . . ." when I noticed grey airplanes in the sky. I could see them from the store window. They were coming in all directions. I counted a Dakota, six Mustangs with their clipped wings, two Bostons, a Lightning, a Tiger Moth, another Dakota.

"They're airplanes from World War II", I said.

"They must be from a museum", Miriam said in her flat voice.

I watched the low-flying planes. They looked so slow. Then they began to circle as if they were going to land.

I went outside to watch them and saw Nick coming

across the car park. He was carrying a loaded shopping bag from the supermarket. I wanted to tell him about the airplanes. But he had his face down. As he came closer I could see tears in his eyes. I thought it was because he had lost his job.

"Tito is dead", he said. And walked by.

The airplanes had disappeared. There was not a trace of their presence. Only a seagull flew low between two high-rises.

I WAS WALKING by the store that showed the time in the capitals of Europe when I saw Mrs Kronick on her way back to the apartment. She had on a smart black and white suit and a large black hat.

"I'm leaving, Mrs Kronick."

She looked at me for a while. Then said.

"When I leave a person I don't care if I never see them again."

"But what about those you love?"

"Of course", she said, "with those you love there's always regret."

On Yonge Street, opposite the main library, I stopped a taxi. It took me to the airport.

North

Last night in your car we barreled northward, car
heat insulated from the outside: wild
we cornered curve on curve of Yukon scene, we let it stretch
to left, to right, a tundraed swamp, uncloaked
and almost frightening, almost
euphoric as helium.

Wood burns better here; you come
from Florida where the Confederate trees won't
light. In this cabin it's so simple even I
can make it blaze, and tame it,
write before it. You can split
log on log of northern wood, so heady
with that skill you brandish axe and threaten
like some Lizzie Borden of a blue-
jeaned man, dark-haired and frigid
as the white sunlight.

When you leave to hike, I leave too,
photographing foliage all the way down
to the creek and turning back
to fire-sit the cabin.
There is no tea or coffee.
We have fouled the milk with ashes.
There are only the wood walls, and my strong fire,
and outside, through the skylight, the hard north.

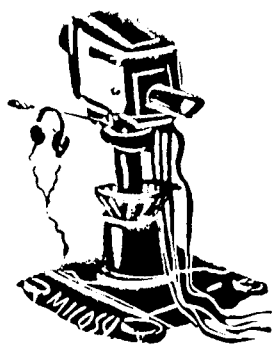
Jean Hanff Korelitz

George Walden

Our Moralistic Media

The Television Pulpit

"The percept had swallowed up the concept."
ALDOUS HUXLEY, *The Doors of Perception*



IN *The Decline of the West* Oswald Spengler notes that gunpowder and printing had come into use at about the same historical moment; that the appearance of the first fly-sheets had coincided with that of the first field-guns; and that the first mass firing of artillery, which took place at the Battle of Valmy in 1788 (a French victory over the Prussians), was preceded by a tempest of propaganda pamphlets. It is indeed a striking thought that the ability to broadcast both death and the popular printed word matured and developed almost contemporaneously. Spengler calls them the "two grand means of the Faustian distance tactics". He would have been highly gratified by the almost equally contemporaneous appearance of two even longer-range and far more powerful weapons: Television and Nuclear Missiles.

The average elector, if he is interested at all, has simple instincts on foreign policy. But if these are to be translated into a healthy influence on governments, something more than instinct alone is required. If real morality subsumes practicality, it helps to know the facts. A simple solution is of course to leave the instincts to the people and for those in power to keep the facts to themselves. In effect and by no

means always because of the villainy of governments, that is what can often happen. For both sides it can be a convenient division of responsibility—but it is a highly dangerous one.

This position is attractive because moral responsibility for policy decisions is implicitly shuffled off on to the politicians; it is dangerous because the two essential ingredients of an ethical foreign policy—right and reason, the moral urge and the need to live in the world as it is—are here divorced from each other. If democratic states are to function democratically in foreign as well as domestic affairs, the public must be informed and its mature opinions—not just its prejudices—relayed and reflected in the media and elsewhere for the edification of its elected representatives and governments.

To Kant and Mill, all this would have been a commonplace. A thinking electorate was at the heart of 18th- and 19th-century optimism—especially educational optimism—and it was still there in the early 20th century. In his autobiographical *The New Machiavelli* (1911), H. G. Wells describes an idealistic friend who had determined to devote himself to a life of social improvement, especially in education. Wells quotes this friend as saying:

"Whatever matters or doesn't matter, it seems to me there is one thing we *must* have and increase, and that is the number of people who can think a little, and have'—he beamed again—'an adequate sense of causation.'"

The 18th- and 19th-century rationalists and optimists found it hard to believe that anyone who knew the facts and had acquired "an adequate sense of causation" would vote for war.

THIS ARTICLE is an extract from George Walden's first book "*The Shoeblick and the Sovereign: Reflections on Ethics and Foreign Policy*", reprinted through special arrangement with St Martin's Press Inc., New York.

Until he resigned his post in 1987, he was Minister for Higher Education. He is Conservative Member of Parliament for Buckingham, and a columnist for "*The Daily Telegraph*". Mr Walden spent 20 years in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, specialising in Russian, Chinese, and French affairs, and serving in Peking and Paris. He was Principal Private Secretary to David Owen and Lord Carrington. He has undertaken post-graduate and sabbatical work at Moscow, Hong Kong, the *Ecole Nationale d'Administration* in Paris, and at Harvard, where he was a Fellow of the Centre for International Affairs.

PEOPLE TODAY gain their education on foreign affairs from the media. With our greater experience of their operations, many of us would now feel less idealistic and more cynical than Wells's young friend. We know, for example, that the line between the transmittal and the transmutation of news and views is not easily drawn. We also now face the entirely new problem of pictorially transmitted information; the hopes of Kant, Mill, Wells, and others were based primarily on the more rational medium of print.

Most people are insulated from international reality not by governments or the media but by a real lack of interest, compounded by a perceived absence of relevance. For perfectly understandable reasons, the average citizen is even less en-

gaged by events beyond his borders than by those beyond his own town, hearth, and home. Even in the late 20th century, his detachment is intensified by the equally natural assumption that the further such events are from him, the less able or obligated he is to react to them. And in the case of relatively self-sustaining economies like that of the United States, it is not immediately clear to him just what he stands to gain by developing a closer acquaintance with life abroad.

He may nod when told that "the globe is shrinking", but in his personal life he sees little clear evidence of that shrinkage: through TV he can see things happening far away, yet somehow this does not bring them closer. The ethical implications of this gap in perception are interesting. Today, world events are thrust on everyone from the urban dweller to the remotest cottager through the resounding imagery of his TV screen. The impact of this relentless bombardment cannot fail to have some effects on his moral sensibilities. In the space of a single news bulletin, if he feels called upon to respond at all, he will be enjoined to stop other peoples' wars, punish international malefactors, rescue hostages, parry a new threat to national security, and bring succour to the world's suffering masses—to be a Samaritan, a Florence Nightingale, and a Saint George. Unless, that is, he retreats into a value-free aestheticism like the TV critic of *The Times* (London) who wrote the following:

"The Viet Nam War—the first on colour television—still looks wonderful, with or without the doomy music made obligatory by *Apocalypse Now*, and this densely researched programme offered many visual treats."

Even as a citizen of a superpower, the average viewer is likely to become increasingly aware of the gap between the horrors he witnesses daily and his ability to do very much about them. It is this realisation that must surely affect his behaviour over time as a moral being. He can turn on himself in guilt, on his government in frustration, or on one of the foreign parties involved in easy condemnation. Alternatively—and more probably—he will turn away altogether, with a shrug and a sigh. Faced with this international deluge of moral disorder, for most people the most attractive options are anger or indifference, emotion or passivity.

VISUALLY OR ORALLY, most individuals, in the West at least, are overwhelmed by the catastrophes of the world at every instant, in ways that do not necessarily reinforce their understanding of it. Not only are the subjects under discussion remote from the average citizen's personal experience; he has no ready means of verifying accuracy, even if inclined to do so, as is possible to some degree on other subjects such as the state of the domestic economy, where he can measure over time whether what he is told agrees with what he sees and hears. There is little incentive for, and few direct means, of discovering the facts about the news from abroad.

Inevitably, too, there will be a predisposition among otherwise honest men and women to think the worst of foreigners. This banal, blatant, and normally innocuous chauvinism,

sometimes indistinguishable from a healthy self-respecting patriotism, is easily inflamed at times of trouble or uncertainty into a more pernicious jingoism. Most people are only too ready to believe that someone is threatening them and to make reciprocal threats. Casually, inadvertently, or instinctively, the press, radio, and television play on these simple emotions.

But the media can play equally powerfully on other emotions too: guilt, shame, and the urge for self-chastisement, as well as pride and self-assertiveness. Just as people can be encouraged to think the worst of others, so they can occasionally be enjoined to think the worst of themselves or their country. It is characteristic of the American Pietist, with his tendency to ask "Who is to blame?" rather than "What is to be done?", to seek opportunities to reproach the United States for international disorders wherever possible, as though the ultimate source of the world's troubles lay in the corruption within one's own heart, rather than anyone else's.

Such attitudes can be a form of moral conceit: chauvinistic pride and national self-flagellation are two sides of the moralistic coin. This is because both attitudes are often self-regarding, taking minimal account of external realities. They are just two among the many emotions that can be and are intensively exploited by the compulsive media. As early as 1831, Alexis de Tocqueville, in his *Democracy in America*, foresaw the risk that the growth of representative government might bring with it increasing vehemence and irrationality in the popular press. He noted that "The characteristics of the American journalist consist in an open and coarse appeal to the passions of his readers". Experience of today's visual media would seem unlikely to modify this view.

THE AVERAGE PERSON in the Western world watches television for several hours a day. Since he or she is unlikely to spend the few remaining leisure hours ascertaining the accuracy of what they see and hear, it seems safe to conclude that many, if not most, people derive much of their most persuasive information on foreign affairs in picture form.

Nor should the influence of television on other media be forgotten. Both the press and radio are in competition with it, constantly striving for greater "picturesqueness" in their own presentation of information. The result is often to redouble the search for greater immediacy, greater vividness, greater vehemence and to provide less sustained analysis, even in the more reputable press.

The inherent limitations of television as a medium of enlightenment in politics in general are compounded in the case of foreign affairs. It is even less likely than in domestic matters to serve as a vehicle for reasoned discussion, and there can be no ethics without reason. Television, in a word, is by nature a moralistic medium.

Apologists frequently argue that, strictly speaking, its function is not to promote moderate, reasoned discussion on foreign affairs or on anything else—its job is to reflect reality in picture form, not to manufacture, analyse, or interpret it. If, for example, politicians choose in their television appearances to appeal to crude prejudices in their remarks on other

countries and to reinforce these prejudices by theatrical artifice in presenting their views, so be it; the blame can hardly be laid at the door of the medium. As the Russians say, "Don't fume at the mirror if your mug is awry". Even if expensive, humiliating, or bloody consequences ensue in US foreign policy from systematically emotive attitudes to a particular foreign country, the camera will again not be to blame; indeed it will be there to monitor the consequences and to take credit for truthful, fearless reporting when "mistakes" in policy are eventually recognised and "corrected".

If we leave aside for a moment all questions of public duty, of selectivity in what is shown, of government control or interference, or of manipulation of access (which is to set aside a good deal), this claim to a sort of detached, benign amorality seems securely based. How can we blame the machine for what happens outside it? But, like other assertions of technological neutralism, it needs closer examination.

HANS MORGENTHAU quotes in *Law, Morality and War in the Contemporary World* (ed. Peter Falk, 1984) a casual remark by a US airman who had been involved in high-level bombing missions over Viet Nam, to the effect that it felt as morally neutral as mending a television set. The man obviously chose his example at random, but the observation is evocative, partly for the reason Spengler saw in the simultaneous appearance of gun-powder and print—the importance of "Faustian distance tactics".

The airman's remark links the drama of bombing missions to humble domestic routine, and the link is technological. The ethical implications of modern technology are not confined to the use of weapons—to defoliants, intercontinental ballistic missiles, or the Strategic Defense Initiative. If it is accepted that men, rather than weapons, are the ultimate cause of war, it could be argued that the technology of communications has a greater potential for evil than that of chemical or nuclear weapons, since it affects human motivation more directly than the mere existence of a particular weapons system. Television, as a "Faustian distance tactic", is at least as powerful as the weapons themselves. By acting as a source of heat rather than light on the subject of defence, for example, it could encourage the stockpiling of weapons in ever-increasing numbers or help to set a climate of political *angst* in which decisions to use them could come to be made.

The peculiar potency of television lies not in the wickedness of the journalists who operate the machine but in the very nature of the machine. Alone among other means of information, photography and film stake an implicit claim to absolute truth, and for all but the more sophisticated this claim is implicitly accepted. In fact, of course, the camera lies constantly, mostly inadvertently, and with total conviction. Lying is simply part of its essence: it cannot possibly live up to its pretensions of complete veracity. It is disjointed, impulsive, illogical; it can illuminate a point, distract, entertain, outrage, or intrigue the viewer. But the one thing it is most unlikely to do is to develop in him "an adequate sense of causation".

The primary function of the medium, as it is currently used,

is to strike the mind by powerful selective imagery. Each image will seem totally persuasive, in a way mere words can never hope to match. It is this totality that is the source of its power, a power that can be disturbing. The impact on the eye and the brain can be as devastating and as unreasoning as that of a bomb on a city. (There are even analogies of idiom—the broadcaster speaks of "blanket coverage" just as the commander talks of "blanket bombing".) Both technologies strive towards the ultimate: complete portrayal of "reality" in one case; complete obliteration of it in the other.

While implicitly asserting its absolute objectivity and comprehensive coverage, television is relentlessly anecdotal: it presents one corner of the reality of a given situation as the whole. Whatever its real importance, a single incident or moment in a battle is shown as symbolising a wider truth, however unrepresentative or remote it may be from the central issue. That is why television is a prey to provincialism. But of course, once broadcast, the event in question acquires a new prominence and *becomes* "the centre of events"—the secret dream of every provincial coming up to town!

The same could be said of print or radio; but there is a big difference. Only television has the power to *impose* itself on millions instantaneously as presenting the incontrovertible truth. A written reportage can mislead, sometimes wilfully, but the printed word does not bring with it the illusion of absolute "reality", an illusion that is inseparable from photography. Inevitably, it will be countered that long-range photography has served an educative and therefore ethical function in foreign affairs, by bringing distant realities closer and compelling us to take a view and shed our protective shield of unconcern. Surely television creates a useful illusion of proximity, making it harder than ever for modern statesmen or the modern public to echo the famous comment of the British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, when Czechoslovakia was threatened by Adolf Hitler on the eve of World War II: that it was a faraway country of which we knew little. . . . A more pertinent example in our own times of this line of argument might be the image of a starving child, a victim of war and famine in the Horn of Africa. Will not such an image, in all its unspeakable pathos, bring home to a resident of Manchester or Chicago the "facts" of the situation and the need to do something to stop the war and to help the refugees, the sick and the starving?

The viewer's first reaction might well be one of immediate indignation that such a tragedy can happen at all. He may instinctively contrast the destitution of the child with his own affluence and feel stimulated to some concrete gesture of sympathy in the form of a generous personal contribution to the aid effort (though this may not be prolonged over time). He might be indignant that his own government is not doing more to help, and be in no mood to listen to the very serious arguments, deployed by humane and respected experts, against too much short-lived aid to such countries.

More likely perhaps, the viewer's sensibilities may have been coarsened by a permanent succession of such pictures and by their habit of merging inextricably and irrationally into an endless fresco of other imagery, real or contrived. He may have been watching Bugs Bunny moments before. At the sight of the starving child, he may be tempted to switch back,

his natural apathy reinforced by a comforting feeling of helplessness or by sheer genteel distaste at the sight. A suspicion may even cross his mind that he is being exploited politically—another incentive to evasion and inaction. Most insidiously of all, he may derive some momentary enjoyment from his own emotions of horror at the spectacle of starvation and from his indignation at his own government's inactivity, confuse this with genuine practical sympathy for the victims, and pass on his way.

Whatever the reaction, one thing seems certain. The image seems far more likely to provoke emotional concern than it is to enlighten the viewer about the real causes—political, diplomatic, economic, social, geographical, and historical—that have combined to produce the starving child. Except for a few rare cases, it is equally unlikely that it will promote any sustained, intelligent interest in these underlying problems. It is much more probable that it will produce a spasm of self-gratifying moralistic “concern”.

It is questionable, then, how far the image itself can bring “the reality” of what is happening to the viewer. But nor will it leave that reality completely unimpaired. By selecting a single potent image of a series of images from a total situation that is often not composed of stimulating, visual material at all, but of a clutch of disparate factors, it will distort or destroy that reality in the imagination of millions of viewers. In other words, the true situation will neither be transferred to Manchester or to Chicago nor remain intact where it is, since it will be changed in the perception of countless millions. But the new “reality” will linger on, acquiring a life of its own, suspended in some intermediate limbo.

In his essay “The Thing” (1958), Martin Heidegger discusses the meaning of distance in the 20th-century world. He foresees that television will definitively change the significance of that word. It will destroy the whole concept of “distance”, imposing “a uniformity of non-distance in which everything will be carried away in confusion”. Everything becomes equally near and far away, and thereby loses its true value and its very being: it exists only in a “non-distance”.

All of us have experienced an inkling of what he means when we see in the flesh a famous cinema or television star or statesman—we cannot believe that we are really seeing the person or that he or she exists at all. The parallel with hallucinations and drugs comes to mind. Aldous Huxley once remarked about his experiment with the drug Mescaline that, when looking at a chair while under its influence, he could no longer see it as a reality at all, since “the percept had swallowed up the concept”.

It is clearly important to beware of overstating the case. To revert to the Horn of Africa, it is obviously true that some members of the public will react to the images of suffering by finding means to generate help for the victims—either through political action to hasten the search for diplomatic solutions, through more long-term aid to encourage self-help in the area, through a higher priority for Third World needs

in the shaping of Western agricultural policies, or by more positive action through international agencies such as the United Nations. Even a short-lived upsurge of public consciousness and generosity is hard to scorn, despite those who argue that instant aid can do more harm than good. When asked why he insisted on pressing pennies into the hands of sleeping beggar boys on his doorstep, Dr Johnson once said that it was to enable them to “beg on”.

One specific instance in which television is widely credited with a direct and, in many people's judgment, highly moral role in world affairs is in the ending of the Viet Nam war. It is hard to deny the influence of television on public opinion in the United States or in other countries at the time, or that the will of the American people and its government to persist in the conflict was eroded by the intrusion into American homes of horrifying scenes of battle and civilian casualties. To the average citizen, the combination of fear for American lives and instinctive guilt at the suffering of the Vietnamese proved intolerable.

But even if we accept that television did help to shorten the war and that this had the result of saving lives on all sides, this does not necessarily tell us anything about the moral issue involved in the conflict, though it tells us a good deal about the power of television. It seems quite possible to suppose that the cameras could have stopped a thoroughly just war in precisely the same fashion. Americans would have been seen dying and using their superior technology to kill the enemy in just the same way, but the righteousness of the cause would have been hard to defend in the face of the visual “reality” about the war as transmitted on TV screens. (All this takes no account of the motives of the camera crew and others, though experience would suggest that they are unlikely to be predisposed in favour of the generals and the Administration.)

Since war depends on national will, in the future it will probably be impossible for Western democracies to wage for any length of time a war that is not central to their own survival. The Falklands War may be seen as an exception to this rule; but it should be remembered both that it was fought in defence of British territory and British subjects, and that the British government deliberately restricted television access to the battlefield—partly as a result of the lessons of Viet Nam.

THOSE WHO MIGHT FEEL CHEERED at the prospect of reduced American involvement in the outside world (and this is a category that could include isolationists of both the Pietist and the Brutalist tendencies¹) will no doubt take into account that Communist and other undemocratic countries suffer no such disabilities at the hands of the media. On the contrary, in the Soviet Union the moralising powers of selective television imagery can be, and have been, used—in Afghanistan, for example—to harden popular resolve, just as the effect can often be to soften it in the West.

Left to itself, television in the West will inevitably make its principal impact on two elements of the moral triad—the means and the consequences of a given action—to the exclusion of the third element, motives. The reason is simple: the means, which by definition must include violence,

¹ In his book, the author uses the phrase “Pietists and Brutalists” to highlight Left-liberal and far-Right attitudes to foreign policy, arguing that they are both essentially moralistic positions.

and the consequence, destruction, are visually exciting. Motives, praiseworthy or otherwise, are not, and they can only be presented verbally. Although television talks, its real language is pictures, and its more rational element—verbal description—has a secondary impact and status. It is astonishing how little people often retain about what is said on television: mostly they are just looking. In that sense, television has not advanced far beyond silent films.

Even where motives are described, those who man the machine often find the temptation to create devastating discontinuities—between “weak”, verbally articulated aims and “strong”, visually conveyed consequences of the most banal but persuasive kind—quite irresistible. In the case of war it may or may not be true that “we went there to defend the peace”. But what the viewer sees are selected images from those that happen to be available of the soldiers of a civilised, rational, and humane democracy killing peaceful civilians in an assault on an enemy-held village. For obvious reasons, there will be little balancing footage from the other side. Morally, therefore, the battle has been lost before it has begun.

It would be wrong, however, to take too narrow a view of the influence of television on military conflict. Although its articulation of motives may be “weak”, it can have a potent effect through its imagery on the generation of political mood and motivation. Hence its effects are not confined to reporting wars: It could have a role in their making as well as in their prevention. It seems clear that television can help to stop wars—just or unjust. Can it help to start them too?

IT WOULD BE INTERESTING to examine the role of the media during the whole build-up of American political involvement in Indo-China in the 1950s and '60s. This was the time when “the China Lobby” was active, and the popular, demonic view of China was a central determinant in United States decision-making. It seems to us today an extraordinary thought that in the early 1960s a majority of United States public opinion was in favour of using atomic weapons against China in defence of Quemoy and Matsu. How many people would be able to say where these islands are today?

It would take a good deal of highly subjective research to establish the effect of television on the debate on China at the time, and the record of individual networks, producers, and commentators would no doubt show up differently in the pitiless light of retrospective judgment. But if we accept that much of American policy towards China was misconceived during much of the period preceding the Indo-Chinese involvement, and if we conclude that there was a dearth of cool, thoughtful, and objective discussion of the “Red China” issue during that time, certain conclusions about the media follow, even if one takes the view (which some will) that they were unduly subservient to the governments of the day.

The discussion is one of enormous complexity, the evidence likely to be highly diffuse, and the conclusions speculative. But on the basis of our own current, daily experience it is hard to allay the suspicion that the TV screen may have made its contribution to the over-heated political atmosphere on

China during the formative years of United States policy towards Viet Nam, less because the “beast” was in the hands of the wrong management—though some may argue that too—than because it is in the nature of the beast to exacerbate prejudice about a distant, complex, and alien reality rather than to promote understanding of it.

It would be hollow praise indeed if television were to be applauded for “stopping the war” in Indo-China if it could be shown to have contributed to the climate in which the war became possible. The fact that it may well have exerted useful pressure on the American government to extricate itself, with public support, from the consequences of a mistaken policy would hardly absolve the medium from some responsibility, however indirect, for promoting the miscalculation in the first place, if such responsibility could be established.

LEST IT BE THOUGHT that this is some revisionist attempt to exculpate culprits or evidence of a generally reactionary disposition against the modern media, it is worth noting the conclusion of the liberal historian and experienced commentator on United States-Soviet relations, George F. Kennan, in a recent discussion of the prospects for an improved superpower relationship after the advent of Gorbachov (“The Gorbachev Prospect”, in *The New York Review of Books*, January 1988, p. 3):

“The improvement of Soviet-American relations poses difficulties enough even when the attendant problems are viewed soberly and in life-sized dimensions. When everything has to be over-simplified, sensationalised, and blown up to dimensions two or three times beyond reality to meet the commercial demands of the press and television, the entire process of constructive statesmanship becomes subject to a heightened level of precariousness.

Whether the process can successfully withstand these strains is a question [I am] able to answer optimistically only—one might say—on the brighter days. But in this political world, where artificially created images are considered more significant than realities, the unexpected is just as likely to assume favourable forms as unfavourable ones. It is always possible, then, that the irrational can provide hope where rationality perceives little reason for it.”

Kennan makes the essential point about the complete arbitrariness of much of the imagery to which we are subjected.

IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT and somewhat pointless to conclude from all this that television is an intrinsically infernal or immoral machine. It is easier to see it as at best an amoral and at worst a moralistic means of communication—a natural vehicle for the Pietist or Brutalist view of the world. The mechanisms of pictorial representation, based as they are on naturalistic illusion, lend themselves all too easily to emotion and romantic extravagance. It is no secret that the chance availability of exciting illustration can sometimes shape the content as well as the form of a commentary. The selection of

participants in discussion programmes can also be made with an eye for theatricality, for heat rather than light, such programmes being by definition visually unstimulating. The same can happen on radio, though the practice is more likely on the screen, simply because the machine is not exploiting its full potential by displaying drab humans talking to one another. Pressure to heighten the drama by excited gestures, facial expressions, or raised voices is not easily resisted by those in search of “good television”.

The principal failing of television is that it can and does encourage simplistic, moralistic responses to complicated questions. It would be equally simplistic, however, to lay too many of our current ills at its door. Nothing is without its compensations, and even the small screen has the virtues of its own shortcomings. One of these is that, because of the compulsive power of the visual image that drives it, it may be less amenable to systematic control or manipulation than other media. Newspapers run carefully angled campaigns on this or that issue, undaunted by the evidence, and have even been known to report events that, in the words of a 19th-century American editor, “had not yet gone through the formality of taking place”.

It is less easy for television, in the West at least, to distort systematically. So enthralled is it by the availability of illustration that it finds it difficult to tame the urge to display its imagery, even if that imagery points in an unwelcome direction. It can and does overcook a discussion or a situation, but it is inherently less able (unless in totalitarian hands) to sustain systematic political bias over long periods (though it can intensify a national *angst*, as over China). It is at the mercy of its preference for immediate sense-impressions and anecdotal detail (“being on-the-spot”) rather than for coherent, synthetic messages.

For this reason most Western governments, of whatever political complexion, are under the impression that the screen is permanently biased against them. In fact, left to itself, television is hostile to all political ideologies. It is by nature anti-

nomian and anarchic. It breaks down reason into meaningless, visual “facts” that often seem to conflict with or make a mockery of attempts by governments to project their policies as sober, consistent, and logical. In totalitarian countries, and whenever there is enough control and a large and ruthless enough bureaucracy, the screen can of course be made to lie just as systematically and far more convincingly than print. But such is its power that it can also induce fear in the hands of those who control it. During the “Cultural Revolution” in Mao’s China the television authorities were so frightened of showing something that might inadvertently expose them to political criticism that they resorted to the safest possible expedient—the non-stop screening of texts and quotations from Mao’s *Little Red Book*.

In my brief discussion I have deliberately stressed the dangers of the visual media and sought to question the assumption that they are a source of enlightenment as well as entertainment. There is no room for absolutist attitudes in this or other fields; we have all seen and listened to TV programmes made by intelligent, sophisticated, and honourable men and women that have sharpened our understanding of this or that aspect of international relations and that *have* succeeded, for us at least, in bringing distant realities closer. It is also the case that some broadcasters wish to use television in a more enlightened way than is often possible at present.

In the light of overall experience, however, it is not easy to dispose of the main question mark over the medium as a whole. If the screen had only half the educative and curative powers some of its defenders ascribe to it and if it were only half as effective a vehicle for public enlightenment as we are sometimes told, given its hypnotic effect and the viewing hours of the public, we should be looking for evidence of a new era of humane understanding among mankind. As satellite broadcasting develops, we should also be looking for a new race of peaceable, global villagers.

Yet we remain sceptical.

© 1988 by George Walden

Chainsaw

The saw is purring, its loop of teeth clean.
A light squeeze of the throttle and it growls.
(One slip then jelly and bone might be seen
through ripped jeans.) Full throttle, the machine howls
from the two-stroke heart. You bring it down, feel
the long leaf shake you, spurting something like
bonemeal. The branch drops. Emboldened, you wield
power—Excalibur cum scramble bike.
On no account picture a beheading,
or imagine a gangster lumberjack.
Forget the recent newspaper heading
that said “Two held after chainsaw attack”.

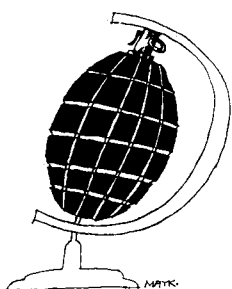
The manual doesn’t mention that the brain
should not be any slacker than the chain.

Dominic Fisher

Jillian Becker

Is There a Case for Terrorism?

The Sacrifice of Strangers



APPALLING as the thought may be, someone is exulting because his bomb blew up a Pan Am jet over Lockerbie on 21 December 1988 and killed 270 people. His supporters must believe that the bombing was justified by their cause. They have not yet been heard to say so publicly; but if and when they have been identified, a multitude of sympathisers may be expected to insist that this was not an act of terrorism but of armed struggle for liberation.

The word "terrorism" is nowadays used almost universally as a pejorative. But there is no agreement on what it is. The PLO may renounce terrorism (as its Chairman, Yasser Arafat, recently declared that it has), and yet continue to bomb and murder, because such activity need not be called "terrorism" but "legitimate armed struggle".

It is widely agreed that international terrorism can best be tackled by international cooperation, to which governments earnestly commit themselves by word and signature. But the commitments are often honoured in the breach rather than the observance.

Even within the European Community, despite all its formal agreements and negotiated spirit of harmony, it happens not infrequently that one state frustrates another's efforts to bring a terrorist to justice. Greece, for instance, refused to let Italy have a Palestinian wanted for bombing a synagogue in Rome. The Greek Minister of Justice, reversing the decision of the courts, let him go to Libya instead. The Italians also failed to extradite a man from Britain whom they wanted for the bombing of the Bologna railway station. Britain, in her turn, was frustrated by the Belgian government's refusal to extradite an Irish priest, Patrick Ryan, wanted in connection with IRA enormities. In this instance, the Belgian govern-

ment faulted the British case as too vague to satisfy Belgian law—a useful but not a convincing explanation. As in the Greek case, the government overruled the courts. Ryan was sent home to Ireland from whence the likelihood of extradition was remote, and indeed failed, again for reasons that had more to do with politics than law. If fear of reprisal in Greece and Belgium, and fear of public opinion in Ireland, influenced the decisions, then the results were successes for terrorism, however little that was intended.

Among those who use, sponsor or openly defend terrorism, few will call it by its name. But it was not always so. In France in the days of the Revolution there were those who found high virtue in it, and in 19th-century Czarist Russia the *Narodnaya Volya* (People's Will) idealists described themselves as "terrorists", justifying "terrorism" with arguments based on the case for tyrannicide. Like Robespierre and Saint-Just they claimed that tyrannicide was a blow for justice, since "No man is more guilty than a tyrant". In those days terrorism was conceived of as political assassination, and the terrorist's only intended targets were certain powerful individuals. The attackers expressed regret if anyone else was hurt by their bullets or bombs—even the soldiers of the Czar. One of the virtues of terrorism, they argued (strangely to 20th-century ears), is that it prevents the horrors of mass insurrection.¹

TO LENIN the *Narodnaya Volya* were admirable but not to be emulated by Communist revolutionaries. He ruled out "individual terrorism", but he did not forbid terrorism as such. Those, he said, who "condemned 'on principle' the terror of the great French Revolution or in general the terror employed by a victorious revolutionary party", were worthy only of being "laughed to scorn".² He held that terrorism could be used as a means by the mass movement, along with all other possible means of resistance, and strictly under the leadership of the Party.

Furthermore, Lenin maintained—and the ruling became part of the holy writ of Marxism-Leninism—that any régime against which "the people" (that is to say, the Communist Party) struggled was *ipso facto* "violent". From that it followed that the struggle, albeit with guns, bombs, murder, maiming, and abduction, was by definition "anti-violent". The argument is repeated today by all manner of Left revolutionaries, including Trotskyists, Maoists, anarchists and

¹ In particular, this was the view of Gerassim Romanenko. *The Journal of Strategic Studies* (vol. 10, no. 4, December 1987) published an illuminating article on him and two other *Narodnaya Volya* writers, Nicholas Marozov and Lev Shternberg. Written by Zeev Ivianski, it is titled "The Terrorist Revolution: Roots of Modern Terrorism".

² V. I. Lenin, *Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, quoted by Roberta Goren, *The Soviet Union and Terrorism* (Allen & Unwin, 1984), p. 22. Dr Goren examines Lenin's attitude to terrorism in interesting detail.

“autonomists”.³ On the whole they eschew the word “terrorism”, though some make a distinction between “scientific terrorism”, which they themselves might employ, and the ideologically misguided terrorism used by apostates and revisionists, or the plainly evil terrorism used by fascists.

“Real terrorism”, they declare unanimously, is the prerogative and inevitable condition of “the bourgeois state”—which, they repeat after Lenin, is “structurally violent”. These, the states of the developed Western world, “white-dominated consumer societies”, are “hypocritical” in condemning what they call terrorism because what they are talking about is really a righteous armed struggle against their own “imperialism”. They “preside over the biggest reign of terror in history”, and “try to turn this fact upside down and paint all armed opposition to them as itself savage terrorism”.⁴

This Leninist argument also underlies the massive and sustained support given by a majority of states in the United Nations General Assembly to certain “national liberation” movements engaged in armed insurrection. Here, however, it is not Lenin who is invoked, but Woodrow Wilson and his brainchild, the Covenant of the League of Nations.

Wilson breathed into the Covenant the inspiration to declare and uphold a principle of “the self-determination of peoples”.⁵ But he seems not to have visualised a struggle of peoples for self-determination within national borders. What was guaranteed was territorial integrity and political independence of states; and many a new state was projected, its frontiers largely determined by the victorious Powers of World War I.

The Charter of the United Nations, while upholding the principle, does not mention a “right” of self-determination. It was only with the fifteenth session (opening on 23 September 1960, when seventeen newly independent states were admitted to the Organisation) that a “right” of self-determination of peoples was enshrined in a General Assembly Resolution—Number 1514 (XV). It was based on a Declaration on Colonialism, drawn up by a group of Afro-Asian states.

The Resolution did not deal (how could it?) with the question of independent territory for self-determining peoples. No decision of Solomonic wisdom was handed down on how to bestow a territory which two or more peoples each claimed for its own exclusive possession.

Another problem was, and remains: what is “a people”? When Biafra tried to secede from Nigeria in 1967, the United Nations insisted on the “territorial integrity” of Nigeria remaining intact, and encouraged the Organisation of African

Unity to do the same. The Nigerian War was never even placed on the agenda of the UN General Assembly or the Security Council. No recognition under Resolution 1514 (XV) has been accorded the self-governing states of Bophutatswana, Venda, Ciskei and Transkei, even though the state which conceded the territory, the Republic of South Africa, did so voluntarily.

“Armed struggle” was not suggested by the 1960 Resolution as a legitimate means to self-determination, but from 1964 onwards some Third World delegates began to present arguments for it. In 1966 Algeria sought to exclude “wars of national liberation” from the general prohibition of war enshrined in Article 2(4) of the Charter, on the grounds that such a war was self-defensive “against colonial domination”. The Western states insisted that only states had the right of self-defence. In 1967 several other Third World states sponsored a Resolution declaring wars against “alien subjugation, domination and exploitation” to be lawful, and two Communist States (Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia) submitted a similar Resolution. The US opposed them on the grounds that the proposal was incompatible with the Charter’s principles against the use of force and again, on the grounds that self-defence was applicable only to states.

The principles against the use of force are the bedrock of the United Nations, whose *raison d’être* is the maintenance of peace and security. It is dedicated to the promotion of peaceful relations between nations and peoples. It could not approve of aggression. But then—what is aggression? The old League of Nations, though founded as a noble endeavour to prevent aggressive war, had failed to reach an agreement on the definition of that contentious word.

IF CONSENSUS WAS but a forlorn hope in the League, in the United Nations it is a predictable and outright impossibility. Third World states form a majority in the UN, and when most of them vote with the Soviet bloc they make up a very large majority, with the power to use the General Assembly according to their united will.

Those who desired the UN to sanction the legitimacy of armed struggle (in certain causes) pressed on with their efforts. In 1970 the Assembly recognised the legitimacy of liberation “struggles”, but did not say that they could be armed. Though a right of peoples to self-determination was unanimously established in international law, some doubt still remained as to whether peoples may use force in the exercise of that right. In 1973, however, a General Assembly Resolution—Number 3070 (XXVIII)—declared “the legitimacy of the peoples’ struggle for liberation from colonial and foreign domination and alien subjugation by all available means, including armed struggle”. And in the same year, Resolution 3103 (XXVIII), though opposed by Western states on grounds of law rather than principle, conferred legal status on “*combatants* struggling against colonial and alien domination and racist régimes” [my italics added].

These Resolutions opened the doors of the General Assembly to Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), which since 1968 had consisted

³ “Autonomen” is the name adopted by a large, loose grouping of violent activists formed in the Federal Republic of Germany in the 1980s.

⁴ This typical statement comes from an article in *A World to Win*, (no. 4, 1985), published by a Maoist group, the Revolutionary International Movement (RIM). It is titled *The False Path of the W. European “Urban Guerrilla”*, and is written by P. Becker.

⁵ Heather A. Wilson’s *International Law and the Use of Force by National Liberation Movements* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1988) is an excellent study on which I have relied for guidance through the numerous UN General Assembly Resolutions in this connection, and to their various possible interpretations.

entirely of groups mounting armed attacks against civilians, hijacking aircraft, and taking hostages. In 1972 one of Arafat's terrorist groups, Black September, murdered eleven Israeli athletes at the Olympic Games in Munich, watched on television by the whole world. The next year, after the 1973 Yom Kippur war, the Arab oil states put up the price of oil, and as their wealth increased enormously, so did their power. Their ability to cut off oil from countries which opposed them helped their wishes to be fulfilled in the UN. In 1974 Arafat addressed the General Assembly and was applauded as a hero, and in the same year the PLO was granted permanent UN "observer status".

This not only legitimised a terrorist organisation, but also set a precedent for the legitimising of others by the same procedure. In effect, it legitimised terrorism itself. In 1976, observer status was also granted to the South-West African People's Organisation (SWAPO). The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was given the right to choose which other African "national liberation movements" might be "recognised", and it has chosen the African National Congress (ANC) and the Panafricanist Congress (PAC). Their representatives are admitted as observers on Committees and Agencies.

THE STATES which had voted for the Resolution by which a terrorist leader was brought into the United Nation's palace of peace were not only Third World and Communist states. They included France, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, and Ireland. None of them apparently saw any contradiction between this innovative step and the purposes of the United Nations. The majority view was that it served those purposes. All was done in the interests of achieving peace on earth. The legitimising of "armed struggle" by "peoples" within the borders of member states was to serve that end. These small wars, if victory went to the right side, would bring about a new order in which at last peace would permanently prevail.

This was all in harmony with Soviet foreign policy. In 1962, Khrushchev had declared: "The struggle for general disarmament facilitates the struggle for national independence. The achievements of the national liberation movements, in their turn, promote peace and contribute to the struggle for disarmament."⁶

⁶ Nikita Khrushchev, Speech to the World Congress for General Disarmament and Peace, Moscow, 10 July 1962, quoted by Roberta Goren, *The Soviet Union and Terrorism*, p. 87.

⁷ For example:

"An act of terrorism constitutes a crime. But some people distort this definition. They distort it by describing as 'terrorism' the struggle being waged by national liberation fighters in various parts of the world for the life and freedom of their peoples. US Secretary of State Alexander Haig, for instance, calls this struggle 'international terrorism' and blames the Soviet Union for it."

From Ernst Henry, *Stop Terrorism!* (Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1982), p. 8.

⁸ The British definition in current anti-terrorist legislation is:

"'Terrorism' means the use of violence for political ends, and

The present Constitution of the USSR declares in Article 28 that the Soviet Union "unswervingly conducts a Leninist peace policy". The policy prescribes a simultaneous pursuit of peace for the USSR and armed insurrection abroad. It seeks peaceful coexistence with "different social systems"; complete disarmament, and the prevention of aggressive wars (that is, avoidance of nuclear conflict with the West). But equally it supports "the struggles of peoples for national liberation and social progress" (that is, Communist revolution). In practice, its support for the approved "national liberation struggles" postpones "universal and complete disarmament", and the recognition of peace as an accomplished fact, until the day these "peoples" triumph in their struggle. "Real peace" is the universal victory of Soviet-led Communism. As long as the Soviet Union holds to its "Leninist peace policy" and to the idea that it has a mission to bring all peoples to the political salvation of its own social order, it will continue to promote insurgency on all continents.

Pursuing its foreign policy, the Soviet Union—along with its satellites and allies—is as obstinate as the majority of Third World states in forbidding denigration of the armed struggle of any approved national liberation movement by the application of the word "terrorist". No matter the method by which the struggle is pursued, no matter if the arms are used against civilians; any such accusation, it is implied, is a propaganda ploy by the Western states to denigrate the movement concerned, to undermine General Assembly Resolutions—and, worst of all—to perpetuate subjugation, discrimination, and aggression in their own interests.⁷

Yet, as terrorism became increasingly an international problem in the 1970s, the need to arrive at an agreed definition became pressing. No Western country has failed to find a definition of terrorism for its own anti-terrorist legislation—one that is legally sufficient for the immediate purposes of the statute and makes lexicographical sense.⁸ Though some are more detailed and long-winded than others, what they boil down to is systematic use of violence in order to create public fear. Dictionaries define terrorism as a mode of governing as well as of opposing government; a method of rule by intimidation, or of coercing government or community by terror-inspiring means. Short or long, the definition is always concerned with terrorism as a method, never narrowing the meaning of the word by qualifications concerning particular ends.

includes any use of violence for the purpose of putting the public or any section of the public in fear."

The US State Department has defined it as:

"... the threat or use of violence for political purposes by individuals or groups, whether acting for or in opposition to established governmental authority, when such actions are intended to shock, stun, or intimidate a target group wider than the immediate victims."

These may be usefully compared to a Soviet definition:

"Terrorism is violence by individual groupings, which have lost touch with the masses, and are currently in opposition to the popular masses."

Taken from Victor Vitiuk, *Left Terrorism* (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1985), p. 74.

But a definition of terrorism which ignores the strategic ends any particular act is intended to serve, is not always applied in practice even by democratic governments. However sternly and consistently they might deal with their domestic terrorists, they often take a less censorious view of foreign terrorist activity. Some Western states have given aid to organisations abroad which are fighting Communist régimes, while knowing them to be carrying out acts of terrorism. The British Foreign Office has excused its reception at ministerial level of the Acting President of the African National Congress (which, like the Irish Republican terrorists in Northern Ireland, explodes bombs in public places, and for even greater intimidatory effect deliberately burns victims to death) by referring to differences between the politics of Britain and South Africa. To do so evades the issue of terrorism as such; and thereby endorses the approach of the UN General Assembly and the Soviet Union. It is a dangerous thing for a British government to do, because it presents a logical argument to the Northern Irish national-separatists in favour of recognition of their own "armed struggle" on the grounds that a precedent has been set.

A DEFINITION of terrorism as a method only, would take away the moral justification, such as it is, for the UN's legitimisation of organisations like the PLO, ANC, and SWAPO. In the General Assembly, the very objectivity of the dictionary can seem discriminatory. Some of the governments represented there have come to power by using such a method; and some among them authorise acts of international terrorism even as the arguments fly about.

To Africans who emerged into independence from an era of European colonisation after World War II, and to Arabs who found Israel planted in their midst by the pan-European powers in the same period in order to fulfil the very same ideal of "self-determination of peoples", the West was the enemy. The cause of "liberation" was just; and terrorism was the warfare of the weak, by which alone the cause might be served.

Islam forbids the victimisation of the innocent, but political terrorism has played a significant part in its history (as in the case of the 10th-century Assassins who used systematic terrorism to intimidate powerful rulers and military commanders).⁹ The use of terrorism by contemporary Arab movements can also, however, be traced to European sources—political activism in the causes of nationalism and Marxism. The constituent groups of the PLO were all of them nationalist and most of them Marxist. Other groups—such as

the Muslim Brotherhood—use terrorism to combat this contamination by Europe, its godlessness and immorality, its secular faiths.

This is also the holy mission of the Iranian head of state, the Ayatollah Khomeini. His followers, known as the Party of God (*Hizbollah*), are notorious hostage-takers and suicide bombers, operating chiefly in anarchic Lebanon, where they have captured dozens and killed hundreds of Americans and Europeans.

For these, as for many others with votes at the UN, what was wanted was a definition of terrorism according to who was using it, against whom, and to what ends. But that was what made agreement impossible since, even among the majority, ends conflicted sharply, and values varied widely.

A United Nations Ad Hoc Committee on International Terrorism in the early 1970s tried and failed to achieve agreement on a definition. Some Non-Aligned States proposed to the Committee that international terrorism be defined as "acts of violence and other repressive acts by colonial, racist and alien régimes against peoples struggling for their liberation." They included (half begging the question) "assistance by a state or organisation to fascist or mercenary groups whose *terrorist activity* is directed against other sovereign countries" [my italics added]; also acts of violence "whose effects are not confined to one state" and which are "committed by individuals or groups of individuals for private gain" or "which endanger or take innocent human lives or jeopardise fundamental freedoms or [making insurance doubly sure] affect the inalienable right to self-determination of all peoples under colonial and racist régimes and other forms of domination".

THIS "DEFINITION" would have meant that the opprobrious word, and the remedies which might follow diagnosis, could be applied to three types of activity.

First, the words "acts of violence committed by individuals or groups of individuals" could have been used to convict the theatrical little groups of young rebels in Western Europe which, though they give themselves names suggesting their role as "brigades", "combatant cells", or some "*Fraktion*" of an imaginary global Red Army,¹⁰ are in reality just the sort of thing Lenin meant by "individual terrorists", and are condemned by the Soviet Union as "ultra-leftist", "Maoist", and "Nechaev-Bakuninist".

Aircraft-hijacking and hostage-taking were to be classed as terrorism if it suited the General Assembly majority, or a particular state, to do so. But approved "liberation" groups would be protected from accusation. By this "definition", such groups would be decreed incapable of terrorism since they were fighting against racist régimes and foreign domination, and were therefore always innocent, always the victims. It would also have allowed those governments against which groups were fighting (first and foremost the ones frequently and routinely accused—Portugal, Israel, Rhodesia and South Africa) to be dubbed "terrorist régimes".

But régimes known to be arming, training, sponsoring or even controlling terrorist organisations were left out. These

⁹ The Assassins were Shi'ites, as are the majority of Iranian Muslims. For authoritative essays on Islam and terrorism, by Bernard Lewis, Elie Kedourie, and P. J. Vatikiotis, see *How the West Can Win*, edited by Benjamin Netanyahu (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1986).

¹⁰ Examples of this type of group are: The Communist Combatant Cells (CCC) of Belgium; the Red Brigades (BR) of Italy; the Red Army Faction (RAF)—otherwise known in its early years as "the Baader-Meinhof group"—of the German Federal Republic; and *Action Directe* (AD) of France. Other similar groups were formed in Portugal, Spain and Greece.

included the Soviet Union, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia, which trained "guerrillas" from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East; Cuba, North Korea, and India, which did the same; South Yemen, where some West Europeans were trained among the rest; and those Arab states, chiefly Syria, Iraq, and Libya, whose domestic terrorism was projected into the outer world—particularly into Western Europe—and which each sponsored its own subgroup of the PLO; also Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, which funded the PLO (though both these states are firmly opposed to "terrorism" in general, and particularly to Iranian-backed terrorism, of which their nationals have been the target).

Most of the potential applications of the Non-Aligned states' definition might have been acceptable to the Soviet Union, though the phrase "repressive acts by . . . alien régimes" could create difficulties for it by validating the struggle of the Mujaheddin after the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan (not to mention many another, if still only potential, rebellion within its own empire).

Western states could only find the proposed definition inadequate and misleading. The task of finding one on which all might agree for all purposes was given up. In all the terrorist-troubled years since then, only definitions of very limited application have achieved any useful degree of acceptance in the UN.

Ideological definitions aside, what the 1973 and 1974 developments achieved in unacknowledged fact was the transformation of the United Nations from an institution dedicated to the promotion of peace into one which would preside over war, and even actively promote it—a war against war.

The eventual outcome could be the collapse of the United Nations Organisation. Acting in concert, a large cluster of despotic states, all but one of them individually weak, has been enabled by the one-state-one-vote system of the UN to turn the international body dedicated to the maintenance of peace by the application of law, into an instrument of their aggressive anti-West policy. What they have accomplished is nothing less than a revolution. Yet the Charter remains unchanged, so that the General Assembly functions as institutionalised hypocrisy. Still dedicated to peace between states and peoples, it legally sanctions terrorist violence; commends it; applauds it; and finances it through its Agencies.

THE UNITED NATIONS is not the only international institution to be transformed over the last twenty years, and turned to ends alien and opposite to its historical purposes. Among others there are the Christian Churches.

Christianity has its own history of violence, not the least important instances of its systematic use being the Papal and

Spanish Inquisitions. Now violence again finds favour with some of the Churches—though not officially with the Church of Rome, which is divided over the issue of "armed struggle". The Pope has consistently pleaded against the use of intimidatory violence, yet "Liberation Theology", which supports it, has become a powerful political factor in Latin America.

In the World Council of Churches, developments paralleled those in the UN: enlargement of Third World membership, and the growth in influence of Marxist analyses and prescriptions.¹¹ Increasingly the Council was swayed by often passionate oratory—though perhaps delivered in a tone more of sorrow than of anger—from Western intellectuals who worked in the Third World and were full of racial and national self-reproach.

AS EARLY AS the 1966 Geneva Assembly, revolutionary violence was declared to be permissible as a last resort, to overthrow "the existing order" which was described as "covertly" violent. This conclusion came at the end of a debate on war, in which the Assembly recalled past declarations that "War is contrary to the will of God". To forestall accusations of double values in supporting nationalism in the Third World while condemning it in the First, it was decreed that nationalisms in the West (or "the North") were "aggressive" and arrogantly superior, whereas in the Third World (or "the South") they were liberating.

At Nairobi in 1975, the conversion of the World Council of Churches to liberation theology was completed. It found that poverty, racism, and militarism sprang from the unjust system imposed on the world by the Western powers. The Churches were called on to change that system to one that served the people instead of exploiting them. The North (led by the United States) and capitalism were, by implication, the forces of darkness. The WCC would pay the forces of light to help them to victory. Grants of money to Third World "liberation" organisations, almost all of a Marxist orientation and many using violence, amounted over the eight years from 1970-78 to over three million US dollars. The WCC insisted that the money was given for humanitarian relief only, but refused to monitor how the funds were spent.

THE ANGLICAN CHURCH did not demur. Through the years it grew stronger in the new faith. In 1988 the Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops passed a Resolution (Number 27) declaring that it:

" . . . understands those who, after exhausting all other ways, choose the way of armed struggle as the only way to justice, whilst drawing attention to the dangers and injustices possible [not inherent] in such action itself."

The Conference reaffirmed that war is "incompatible with the teaching and example of Our Lord Jesus Christ". Absence of war, however, is not "true peace" for "there is no true peace without justice". The "reformation and transformation of unjust systems", the Resolution runs, "is an essential element of our biblical hope".

¹¹ For a full account, see Ernest W. Lefever, *Amsterdam to Nairobi: The World Council of Churches and the Third World* (Ethics and Public Policy Center, Washington, D.C., 1979). Also see J. A. Emerson Vermaat, "Soviet Manipulation of 'Religious Circles' 1975-1986", in *The New Image-Makers*, ed. Ladislav Bittman (Pergamon-Brassey's, 1988).

The only unjust system condemned at the Conference was that of South Africa. None of the Resolutions of the Conference indicated whether the Bishops believe the system in the Communist countries to be just or unjust. They do go on, in the same Resolution 27, to declare their support for "direct non-violent action, civil disobedience and conscientious objection", and to "pay tribute to those who in recent years have kept before the world the growing threat of militarism" (that is, the Peace Movement). The threat to "peace" is diagnosed as "militarism", not as the spread, whether by peaceful or violent means, of totalitarian ideology. The Resolution makes no concession to the Western view, admits no reason for the West's defensive measures, pays no tribute to the Defence policies which have probably prevented another major war.

Taken as a whole, the Resolution affirms that war is not

permissible in any circumstances, not even as a last resort, and cannot serve just ends. But "armed struggle" *is* permissible, and serves "justice". No guidance is offered as to when "all other ways" might be reckoned as exhausted, or how "justice" may be recognised and where it is to be found. The vocabulary, the phraseology, the intended connotations, and the content closely match similar policy-pronouncements of the Soviet Union and the United Nations. As another Resolution of the same Conference called for the "unbanning of the African National Congress and the Pan-Africa[nist] Congress", just what their "armed struggle" means in the real world becomes apparent. Only "in the circumstances of Northern Ireland" did the Conference "condemn all violence".

At Lambeth—as everywhere, and always—the case for terrorism is a case for someone else to be its victim.

Regent's Park, NW1

The goats had a party last night.

Tigers came: deserting the cool gardens.
Their pond lies empty, desecrated
with mud washed from feline paws
as they pace restless before the glass.

Wolves: replete in their stony wood
with pickings cast aside by distracted men
hurrying to escape the clammy grasp
of a humid sun-stolen morning.

Elephants: listless in the wake
of a march across mountains unbroken
by the arrogance of human ingenuity.
A light chain will suffice
to protect Hannibal's tanks
before a new Cannae.

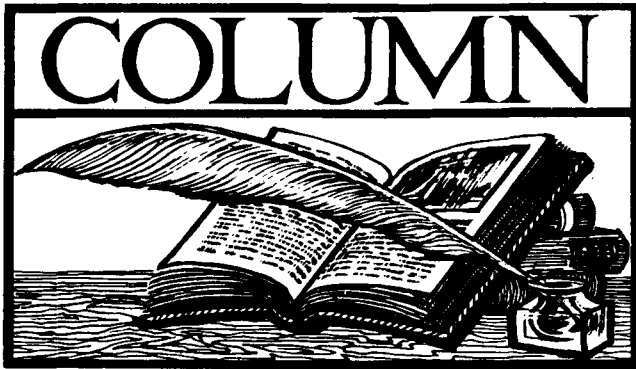
Owls: unblinking, silent, bearing gifts
of expiation in talons sharpened
on a dead tree-trunk: white mice
sacrificed against the night,
to lay on the altar of watchful Athene.

Dawn comes: alligators desert the warm swamp.
Glide silent past sleeping prey
dreaming of home.

Morning: a still silence
broken only by malicious screams
from guests uninvited.

And the goats sit, placid. Nothing
will disturb their quiet desperation
as they rest immobile under a sun
which burns away their memories.

Edward Rogerson



HOW WOULD YOU plan your ideal hotel bedroom? I know a few things I should ban from mine. Twin beds, for a start: how many couples have to wrestle with mattresses and bed-linen to arrange an uncomfortable makeshift double bed? Then there are German duvets—too short to tuck in, too narrow to stay on, stifling in summer, inadequate in winter. How do tall Germans manage to sleep with warm feet? Perhaps they rely on the central heating and air-conditioning: but that's another thing. Some air-conditioners sound like permanent atmospheric: and some hotels that use them won't allow guests the luxury of an open window. Once, in New Orleans, I had to threaten smashing the glass before the bell captain produced the necessary key.

There are also minor irritations. Some chains of hotels pile the table high with promotional literature: it mostly features fat nonentities in tuxedos enjoying a drink with the manager in The Star Trek Room. Others feature fixed clock radios in lieu of an early call: they're frequently limited to the local equivalent of the golden oldie singalong programme. Almost every large hotel, nowadays, also offers each guest a refrigerated mini-bar. Just the thing, you may think, for insomniacs parched by the air-conditioning: but look at the prices. In Luxembourg recently, a miniature of whisky from the mini-bar cost exactly the same as a full litre bottle in the airport's duty-free store.

No: my ideal hotel bedroom would dispense with gimmicks and gadgets. It would give service instead. A bowl of fresh fruit and a vase of flowers, certainly; non-blinding bedside lamps; a usable desk with a proper light, ample writing-paper, and a working ball-point pen. Bottled water in a cooler; plenty of clothes-hangers; a bath and wash-basin with rubber, not metal or plastic, plugs. Breakfast with fresh bread, real milk, and tea not made with tea-bags. No chivvy-ing to collect the tray, as in some French hotels, incessantly demanding "*le plateau*" before you've eaten *le plat*; but rapid bedmaking once the guest's departed, to avoid returning in mid-afternoon to a room like a wrecked bordello.

I'd retain, in fact, only one routine feature from most hotels I've stayed in; and that is the multi-channel television set. However good the company downstairs may be, there's always a twinge of guilty pleasure in putting the door on the chain, loosening one's tie, slipping one's shoes off, and dipping quickly through the assorted fare on the country's TV. In some European cities, this often includes foreign TV as well. For any visiting journalist, it surely beats cab-drivers as a source of local colour.

Nowhere was this more obvious than in Florence a couple of months ago. After a long, high-minded day at a learned conference, I punched the television buttons in search of entertainment. Fifteen of them produced pictures: but only one—for France's *Antenne 2*—showed anything worth watching at that time of night. Apart from sport and pop music, most of the Italian channels were featuring situation comedies or soap operas, all frequently punctuated by the self-same advertisements, cataleptically boring by the fifth or sixth time around.

There was one exception. I forget which channel it was—but I kept coming back to it, for reasons that will soon emerge. It was a quiz show with two contestants at a time, one male and one female. The master of ceremonies was a plump, artificially grinning man with a shock of curly dark hair. He looked rather like the late Alexander Woollcott, of whom someone once said: "His head is kinda big, but his face is kinda small." Signor Alessandro, as we may as well call him, also had small hands and feet for such a pear-shaped body, and his gestures were neat and precise rather than *macho*. However, he was surrounded by what used to be called "lovelies"—wobblingly nubile young women, as in the Benny Hill show, but topless. Nor was this all. The contestants in the quiz, if they got the wrong answer, were themselves invited to perform a mild strip-tease. I made an excuse and switched channels, of course, before they got beyond the bathrobes provided by the ever-thoughtful programme-makers.

THIS MAMMARY memory was very much in my mind when the British Government published its recent thoughts on the future of broadcasting. One independent TV company had even been advertising in the press the prurient Italian-style dangers it feared we might face in a deregulated TV market—though later reports alleged that the strip-teasing Italian housewife supposedly shown in the ads was in fact a model from a British agency. Would the real thing have proved too popular to make the point?

As it happened, the warning may well have been needless. The Government's plans include a watchdog, headed by a respected figure, to curb any disastrous excess. Nor is Government thinking on the future of television untimely, a pointless onslaught on the present four-channel system with which many British viewers are still content.

Inevitably, satellite TV will sooner or later increase most viewers' choice—of channels, that is. Whatever regulations may seek to restrict or restrain satellite signals, it will be very difficult to prevent transmission, and almost impossible to prevent reception. Powerful signals can already be received on quite small dish antennae; and policing people's use of such dishes would be as impracticable as it was to police citizens' band radios when they were still illegal.

What can and will be done, no doubt, is to carve up the frequencies, as in the case of sound radio: but, although jamming may be technically feasible—rather more so, perhaps, than for sound alone—no democratic Government seems likely to be able to stop its citizens tuning in to satellite television from most places in the world.

The satellite revolution, in other words, is already breaking up Britain's double duopoly of BBC and commercial television, each occupying two channels. The TV sets now being sold have enough buttons to pilot a 757. Change, welcome or otherwise, has become inevitable.

With it will come further pressure on finances—in two different forms. The first concerns commercial television, financed by advertising revenue, but not involving the sponsorship of individual programmes, as in the United States. This was a firm stipulation of the original Act establishing commercial television; and it has spared programme-makers from having to obey the unpredictable, unprofessional whims of marketing directors working for giant corporations. The closest that such firms come to influencing programmes, publicly at least, is to compete most heavily for the most popular slots. In future, such competition may be intensified; but what worries programme-makers rather more is the fear that advertising revenue will be spread too thin. With so many channels on offer, rates may have to come down; and if they do, programme budgets will have to be trimmed. This, some believe, will lead to a loss of quality.

That fear needs qualifying, I think. First, anyone who has worked with TV knows that some costs could be cut without any effect except on labour relations. "Old Spanish customs" are not a monopoly of the old Fleet Street presses. How costly they are, and how hard to abolish, only time will tell. But there clearly is some leeway—though perhaps less than some Ministers think. Similarly, the phrase "loss of quality" is ambiguous. Does it mean "production values"—gloss? Or content—human interest, depth, honesty, energy, tough-minded questioning? None of these in itself need cost much money—though the people who supply them may not come cheap. So it may indeed be tempting—but not inevitable—to go for simple sit-coms or to buy-in US cop series rather than make *The Jewel in the Crown*. But if so, don't blame the Government: blame technology and satellite TV.

The second kind of pressure on finance will be political; and its target will be the BBC's licence fee. True, the Government has guaranteed that the fee will continue for a number of years; but it's not fully guaranteed against erosion by inflation; and its long-term future remains in doubt. Meanwhile, the Corporation is being encouraged to maximise its other revenues—from the sale of programmes, for example—and to cut costs. Here, too, there may be some leeway; but in sound radio, at least, margins are already tight.

This, in fact, is where I believe that alarm bells should be ringing loudest. I'm not unduly bothered by the prospect of feebler, sillier, more boring, or even pornographic TV. Apart from news, current affairs, wildlife programmes, and old movies, most of the output on both majority channels in Britain, before the late evening, has become tedious already; and the two minority channels, BBC 2 and Channel Four, are less impressive than either Radio 3 or Radio 4. Sound radio, on those two stations, is still broadcasting for adults. Television—with many important exceptions—often seems to be catering for dopes.

Until some years ago, BBC sound radio users paid a licence fee. Before post-War television, of course, this was the Corporation's only fee. Then, with the quasi-universal spread of

small transistor sets, it became more difficult to monitor the unlicensed reception of sound radio, and the licence for it was abolished. Henceforward, BBC sound radio rode on the back of the television licence fee—making it still more vulnerable to any financial squeeze. At about the same time or shortly afterwards, commercial radio stations were launched both locally and in the capital, drawing their revenue from advertising slots.

The BBC reacted by copying them. It had already done so in the case of Radio Caroline, an earlier pirate station which had broadcast pop music from somewhere in the North Sea. The BBC's response was Radio 1, a pop-music station which tries to sound commercial: it and its sweet-music sister Radio 2 both play jingles advertising their own wares. Similarly, the Corporation went into local radio to compete directly with its commercial rivals, once again offering quite a lot of the same lowish-grade fare.

The reason, its spokesmen explained, was that because the BBC was mainly funded by the licence fee, it had a duty to offer a full range of services—from Radio 3 and *musique concrète*, through *Gardeners' Question Time* on Radio 4 to Perry Como on Radio 2 and Rutting Slobs on Radio 1, not to mention housewives' phone-ins or whatever on the local stations. Unless it was thus universal, the BBC argued, it would have less moral and political claim to the licence fee.

This always seems to me a hazardous argument. The BBC's charter enjoins it to inform and educate as well as entertain; and to pump out much of what it now does might be thought unbalancing to its triple task. If, moreover, it becomes harder to tell the difference between much BBC output and that of commercial stations, it becomes easier for the BBC's critics in Government or elsewhere to argue that it too should take advertising—if not, indeed, sponsorship itself.

BOTH SUGGESTIONS, in fact, have now been made. If they were to be followed, it would spell slow death for public-service broadcasting in Britain. Some robust free-marketeers seem prepared to face that prospect. I'm not. And the reason has to do with what some critics of the system still call "élitism". To me, that's simply a dirty word for upholding standards.

It used to be generally accepted that head-counting, vital to democracy, was not much use to science or art. What mattered there was the content of the heads, not their number. Few sensible people would choose a surgeon just because he was likeable; nor would they necessarily want the painting, the music, or the literature that sold the most. They would certainly object to best-sellers if they ousted all competition, or made it so expensive as to be out of reach. Fully to understand art as to understand science, education and experience are essential—otherwise we should all still be singing nursery rhymes or reading *Tiny Tots*.

Now, increasingly, *la trahison des clercs* is selling the pass to schlock. Egalitarian academics vaunt "popular culture"—which often means the highest common factor (often miscalled "the lowest common denominator") of what can be done

or savoured without skill, knowledge, or taste. Art is called "high art", as if it were the prerogative of elevated personages, not something to which anyone can climb. Any attempt to discriminate, finally, is called "élitist". And while Left-wingers promote tendentious rubbish, Right-wing partisans of business sponsorship see no harm in "safe" choices, classical lollipops, and the Texas chain-store massacre of reproduction Old Masters.

Gresham's Law—that bad currency will drive out good—thus has culture in a double bind. The answer is enlightened élitism, as practised traditionally by the BBC. The Third Programme, even in its modified and more musical form as Radio 3, remains the keep of the castle—a stronghold of excellence which some call a ghetto, as if that were an insult. Radio 4, with a middle-aged, middle-class audience (another dread reproach), is eclectic, literate, moderate, and wise, as well as frequently funny, on purpose. The cost of both is tiny by comparison with television programmes; but if the licence fee diminishes in real terms, and one day disappears altogether, would an income from subscription—another sugges-

tion now floated—be enough to keep the two civilised networks alive? I rather doubt it; and so do others better briefed than I.

Altogether, then, the prospects look dispiriting. This is not, I repeat, the fault of the British Government: but Government action, rather than benign neglect, will be needed if the future is to be saved. The licence fee should be made permanent, and index-linked to production costs; at least the present portion of it should be guaranteed to Radios 3 and 4. The BBC, once that was done, could stop some of its current attempts to cover the waterfront; make some long due economies in the process; and revitalise its commercial section, BBC Enterprises, which has only recently got around to selling cassettes of its most popular sound radio shows.

That, incidentally, completes my specification for the ideal hotel bedroom. In future, it would have a VCR and a cassette sound system, for playing my own and a small library of high-brow hotel tapes. If we're going to be élitist, let's do it in style.

M

Benalmadena Costa

(for Kate)

At the Puerto Deportivo the new marina
Mews up self-trusting human wishes—
White cruisers lolling in their oils;
And even honest fishing boats lie there,
Scrubbed and Andalusia-coloured,
In quarantine, their lazaretto by
A corrugated grey asbestos shed.

At the old abandoned jetty's end
Deliberate anglers sweeten the breakers
Daily with fry and kneaded bait; upon
The smoother of its broken concrete slabs,
And spilling over across the combed sands,
The darkening tourists bare their napes
And variously guilty breasts.
The sun, made privy to their public parts,
Sugars the water and lets down
Its hooks among the livid pedalo-riders,
The gleaming flushed sunbathers;
Equally among my basking daughter's
Frail cells, suspended in her skin
Like fish in the chambers of the sea.

Along with beach-bar cats, lost dogs,
Skeletal grapestalks and impotent olive-pits
I sit in shade at noon, high on local gin,
And cast a prayer, incapable of answer:
Let the greased girl sleep on and dream
A cool uncomplicated heaven
Where all her sins are pups and kittens which,
When they stray, are let come home
To be pampered and forgiven.

Gordon Wharton

Matthew Mead

Sclerosis

I

A dusk before the dark,
a clank of armoured cold,
dull words unmeant to mark
a meaning left untold

to no one; braincells dead,
arteries almost blocked,
an echo in the head
of doom gone off half-cocked.

The watching eyes are bright;
pale lips and mauve-rinsed curls
make up by dying light
a dream of wrinkled girls.

A silence before silence
as if a thought went on
and shudders yielded sense
although the mind is stone.

II

Remember nothing and remember this
remember nothing then remember never
kisses beyond recall in any kiss
molten virginities burnt out forever

Remember knowing nothing ever known
remember knowing nothing known again
the cringe of being in a cold dimension
the call of coming in deflowered disdain

Do not remember then remember why
there was no more than all there is no more
than painted eyes made up to catch the eye
than silken skin to cover and ignore

Remember nothing and remember how
all shall be said with nothing left to say
ice on the pane the breath's unbroken vow
when night and nothing mock the breaking day.

III

After shifts of night unslept—
no one keeping watch in nowhere
waiting for day not to break

I have seen a dawn that crept
leprous up a silver stair
like a dead man wide awake.

Nameless faces fill the day,
strangers fated to survive;
none I know or wish to know.

Few I know are left alive,
faceless names are fled away.
Few who knew me know me now.

Now forgotten one by one
faceless name and nameless face
mock me into empty age

summon up remembering

and the kiss no more a kiss
and the shape of nothing done
and the dead to crowd the page.

I am nothing more than this.

Coda

Fatal time, mortal fate,
Old and too old.
Bright eyes blank in the cold.
Late and too late.

Elizabeth Jennings

A Song at Night

Time and the minute, choice and the hour
Be now and held, and sweet
Moments of carefully measured power
Light up the sky and let

A full bold moon, an elegant stance
Of stars bring wonder from us.
O the universe teaches us its dance,
Without it we've no use.

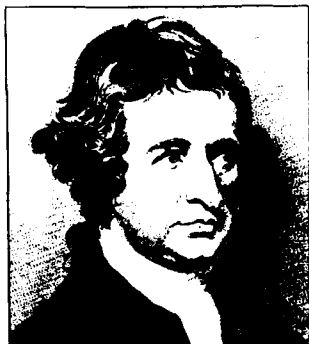
O moon have a music to whisper and
Choose any instrument
At the fingers' touch or the hands' command
And sing our circumstance

Which should be as purposeful as the full
Stare of the moon tonight.
Let love be the power which will always roll
Us up in sleep that's light

But lasting and not broken up
Like a small life after death
When even the strongest star will sleep
And the moon draw her last breath.

Burke's Great Melody

Warren Hastings's "Opera of Fraud"—By CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN



"BURKE's great melody" is, of course, a quotation from W. B. Yeats's poem "The Seven Sages":

*American colonies, Ireland,
France and India
Harried, and Burke's great
melody against it. . . .*

Yeats believed in the essential unity of the evil which Burke was fighting. So did Burke. Yeats in the 1920s read a great deal of Burke and could find much warrant for that "it". But I think there are two passages in Burke which Yeats may have had particularly in mind. The first is in Burke's "Second Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe on the Catholic question":

"I think I can hardly overrate the malignity of the principles of Protestant ascendancy, as they affect Ireland—or of Indianism, as they affect these countries—or of Jacobinism, as they affect all Europe and the state of human society itself. The last is the greatest evil. But it readily combines with the others, and flows from them."

The second "it" passage is from the first day of Burke's "Speech in Reply", in which he wound up the impeachment of Warren Hastings before the House of Lords. Burke makes a vow, on behalf of himself and his fellow managers of the impeachment:

"... that they will ever glow with the most determined and unextinguishable animosity against tyranny, oppression and peculation in all, but more particularly as practised by this man in India; that they never will relent but will pur-

sue and prosecute him, and it, till they see corrupt pride prostrate under the feet of justice. . . ."

Yeats's "it" stands out there, I think.

By "Indianism" in the letter to Langrishe, Burke meant a corrupt and oppressive system of government in India, of which Warren Hastings was, in Burke's eyes, the incarnation and presiding evil genius. The Second Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe was written on 26 May 1795, a little over a month after the acquittal of Warren Hastings by the House of Lords, from the articles of impeachment against him by the House of Commons (in which Burke had been chief manager).

At the time of the letter to Langrishe, in the immediate aftermath of the acquittal of Warren Hastings, Burke treats Jacobinism as "the greatest evil". But less than a year later, we find that Burke's priorities have altered. Indianism is now a much worse evil even than Jacobinism.

"Our Government and our Laws [he writes to Lord Loughborough in March 1796] are beset by two different enemies which are sapping its foundations, Indianism and Jacobinism. In some cases they act separately, in some they act in conjunction. But of this I am sure; that the first is the worst by far and the hardest to deal with."¹

The promotion of Indianism on the scale of infamy was stimulated by the decision of the East Indian Company, after the acquittal by the House of Lords, to confer a pension on Warren Hastings. We might perhaps think that a pension for the former Governor-General was a trivial enough matter and hardly warranted the portentous language of Burke's letter, but for Burke the pension was the last straw. Taken together, acquittal and pension signalled the acquiescence of the British ruling classes in the oppression of India, personified in Warren Hastings—and all this after the oppressive system had been described and analysed, by Burke and others, in both Houses of Parliament over a period of twelve years. When British society appeared to take Warren Hastings to its bosom, it embraced along with him the oppression of India and the corruption of its oppressors. The heritage of the Glorious Revolution, which Burke and his friends had

This essay originated as a contribution to a Warren Hastings bicentenary Commemoration Conference held at Edinburgh University on 13 February 1988. The conference proceedings will be published this spring by Edinburgh University Press under the title "The Impeachment of Warren Hastings: Bicentenary Papers".

In 1969 Conor Cruise O'Brien edited Edmund Burke's "Reflections on the Revolution in France". He is currently at work on "Edmund Burke and the Great Melody", which will be published in due course by Hamish Hamilton.

¹ Edmund Burke, letter to Lord Loughborough, circa 17 March 1796, in *Correspondence of Edmund Burke* (ten volumes, edited by various hands; Cambridge University Press, 1958-78), Vol. VIII, p. 432.

upheld and extolled, appeared contaminated through the embrace of Warren Hastings.

Edmund Burke, for reasons which I shall touch on later, had always been ambivalent about that heritage, which overshadowed and blighted a particular heritage of Burke's own, in Ireland. Burke's positive feelings about England and Whiggery attach themselves to a particular group of virtuous and reform-minded noblemen: principally Lord Rockingham and, after Rockingham's death, Earl Fitzwilliam. Burke's *negative* feelings about England attached themselves, with corrosive intensity, to Warren Hastings, Governor-General of Bengal.

In the first half of 1795—as Burke saw things—the evil side of England (in the person of Warren Hastings) triumphed over the good (in the person of Earl Fitzwilliam). Fitzwilliam had been appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. He had gone there, with Burke as his mentor, to relieve the oppression of the Catholics. Those Protestants who ran the administration of Ireland, and profited from it, had enough influence in London to get Fitzwilliam recalled.

Fitzwilliam's recall was followed, within a few weeks, by the acquittal of Warren Hastings in the House of Lords.

IN THE MINDS OF most contemporaries, there could have been no connection between the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam and the acquittal of Hastings. For contemporaries, as to many later historians, one event was in the box marked "Irish affairs", the other in the box marked "Indian affairs". But for Burke, the two boxes were interconnected. As Burke wrote to Henry Grattan in March 1795:

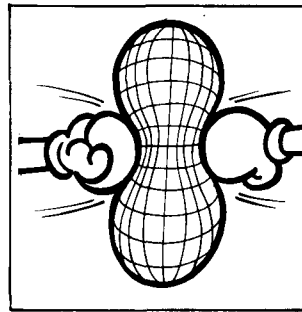
"We have had an Eastern and a Western Chief Governor before the Publick. Mr Hastings is acquitted by the House of Lords. Lord Fitzwilliam is condemned by the Cabinet."²

Burke's tone there may be deceptively calm, but Grattan would have been aware that Burke was referring to twin enormities. From this date on, until his death less than two years later, Burke is radically disenchanted with British society, for what he regarded as appeasement of Jacobinism, condonation of Indianism, and acquiescence in an intensification of Protestant ascendancy in Ireland. This is a complex pattern, and the first component is in latent contradiction with the other two. In relation both to Ireland and to India, the great anti-Jacobin can sound quite like a Jacobin himself. As he wrote to Earl Fitzwilliam (February 1795):

"All the Miseries of Ireland have originated, in what has

produced all the miseries of India, a servile patience under oppression, by the greatest of all misnomers called prudence. . . ."³

Great Causes



YEATS WROTE of "American colonies, Ireland, France and India". It was the last three, without the first, that furnished the combined and abiding preoccupation, even obsession, of Burke's last years. There is a chronological gap. Although Ireland was a subject of profound concern to Burke

throughout his life, America was mainly a concern of his relatively early years in politics: 1765-1776. India begins to interest Burke as early as 1777 but does not become a prime concern until 1783, the year in which Burke first conceived the design of impeaching Warren Hastings (the impeachment itself begins before the House of Lords five years later). The affairs of France do not become a prime concern until 1790, the year in which Burke comes to think that revolutionary principles are gaining ground in England, moving in over the bridgehead of anti-Popery.

Yet there is a connection between Burke's American writings and his Indian writings. The connection is the theme of abuse of power; great Empire and little minds going ill together; the arrogance and frivolity of the metropolis in relation to the imperial possessions. In notes for a speech in May 1777—right at the beginning of his interest in India—Burke writes:

"Some people are great lovers of uniformity—they are not satisfied with a rebellion in the West. They must have one in the East: They are not satisfied with losing one Empire—they must lose another—Lord N[orth] will weep that he has not more worlds to lose."⁴

In retrospect, a certain irony appears in that. For Warren Hastings came to be seen by his contemporaries (and has been seen by historians) as the man who by prompt and decisive actions "saved" India from going the way of America. As Burke saw it, however, British control over India would never have been a danger in the first place, had it not been for the policies pursued by Hastings—and the rebellions deliberately provoked by him for the loot to be acquired in crushing them. But British opinion seems to have been more impressed by Hastings's success in suppressing the rebellions than by the claim that he had provoked them.

In any case, it was immediately after the end of the American colonial war that India became the great "cause" of Burke's life and that he conceived the idea of impeaching Warren Hastings. And Burke himself regarded his "Indian" arguments as consistent and continuous with his American ones.

² Edmund Burke, letter to Henry Grattan, 20 March 1795, *Correspondence*, Vol. VIII, p. 206. Hastings had not yet been acquitted on all charges, but had already been acquitted on the first two, and part of the third. Fitzwilliam had not yet left Dublin when this letter was written, but the Cabinet had already decided against him.

³ Edmund Burke, letter to Earl Fitzwilliam, 10 February 1795, *Correspondence*, Vol. VIII, p. 147.

⁴ *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke*, vol. V, *India: Madras and Bengal, 1774-1785* (ed. P. J. Marshall, Oxford, 1981), p. 40.

The Crime & the Criminal

IT SEEMS QUITE CLEAR that Yeats's lines fit a pattern which Burke himself assigned to his pursuit of his four great causes, including his impeachment of Warren Hastings. But does that pattern fit the realities of the case?

There is a school of thought, still fairly influential, which holds that Edmund Burke, beneath all the sublimity of his rhetoric, was a pretty sordid politician: opportunistic, venal, servile. Tom Paine made that point quite elegantly in the *Rights of Man*, describing Burke as "accustomed to kiss the aristocratical hand that hath purloined him from himself".⁵ Karl Marx found Paine's theme congenial and developed it with a savage sarcasm. Sir Lewis Namier, who followed in the footsteps of Paine and Marx, accompanies almost all his references to Burke with a sneer, and saw him as essentially a hired hand with a fancy line of talk. Namier's position on Burke is summed up in his words about "the great lords whose livery [Burke] wore". If we adopt that view, then the "great melody" is one of rhetoric only. Burke's causes were chosen for him by his political masters, and he himself was no more than an advocate, employing his eloquence in the service of his clients.

The ten volumes of Burke's *Correspondence* do not support the Namier view; quite the contrary. There are no letters in which Rockingham, or Portland, or Fitzwilliam dictate to Burke what line he is to take. There are plenty of letters in which Burke tells these great lords what *he* thinks *they* should do. No "livery" is in evidence. Burke seems to have played a larger part in shaping the policies followed by the Rockingham Whigs than the other Whigs played in shaping Burke's policies in major issues, such as India.

The reductionist view of Burke existed long before Marx and Namier lent their authority to it. It was a view current in Burke's own lifetime, not only with Tom Paine, but also among Burke's many other enemies. Warren Hastings was understandably inclined to this view, and his agents vigorously propagated it in the press. Edmund Burke was alleged to be taking revenge against Hastings because of Hastings's obstruction of the interests of Edmund's cousin, Will Burke.

This theory does not hold water. It has now been shown that the obstruction of which Will Burke complained took place *after* Edmund Burke had started his campaign.⁶ It was indeed Will Burke whose interests first attracted Edmund Burke to the affairs of India. But once Edmund Burke's interest was engaged, his mind took off on its own, needing no further prompting from his kinsman. Indeed it appears

that his kinsman's interests were an *inhibiting* rather than a stimulating factor on Edmund Burke's Indian activities. As Will Burke wrote to Edmund's son, Richard:

"Oh my God there is something sad and at the same time ridiculous that the foreign papers should consider me as the spur and motive of your father's Eastern exertions, when in fact his alarms for me are the only stay or reserve that hangs on his mind, in that noble walk of his. . . ."⁷

It is also alleged that Burke, in his attacks on Warren Hastings, is the vehicle for the vengeful passions of Philip Francis. It is true that Francis, who had hoped to supplant Hastings, was motivated by a desire to ruin him; and true also that Francis was a major source of information for Burke. The information was damaging, and intended to be so; but it has not been shown to be inaccurate. Hastings's replies to Burke's charges—many of them based on Francis's information—were generally bizarre, tangential, amnesiac, and never attained the status of a refutation. Burke's Indian exertions continued for years after his friendship with Philip Francis came to an end in 1790, when Francis wrote Burke a patronising letter about the *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. (This was the letter in which he offered to teach Edmund Burke English.) But even well before that, Burke had made clear to Francis himself that he intended to be guided by his own judgment and not that of Francis or anyone else. "When you or [Fox] bring any Indian vote before the House", wrote Burke in November 1785, "the single vote to which I am reduced will be given to Justice in the first place; in the next to you and to Mr Fox."⁸

A modern authority, not unsympathetic to Warren Hastings, accepts Burke's independence and disinterestedness. P. J. Marshall, in *The Impeachment of Warren Hastings*, writes: ". . . once his sympathies were engaged, Burke always seems to have decided his own course of action by what he genuinely believed were the best interests of the company's Indian subjects." Marshall adds: "This single-minded devotion to the interests of Indians gives Burke a unique position among his contemporaries and would have distinguished him in any period."⁹

WILL BURKE FOUND the Indian sympathies of his cousin incomprehensible. He wrote to Edmund's son Richard that he could not "for the soul of me" feel as Edmund did about "the black primates". Will Burke's sort of feelings were probably more widespread among contemporaries than Edmund's. Edmund himself was aware that attempting to arouse sympathy, in England, for Indians, was uphill work. Addressing the House of Commons in 1783, he used the words ". . . in order to awaken something of sympathy for the unfortunate natives, of which I am afraid we are not perfectly susceptible". In the House of Commons, Burke's reference to the sufferings of elderly Indian women were laughed at by some of the young members. "The laugh is *seasonable*", said Burke grimly, "and the occasion decent and proper. . . ."¹⁰

To Joshua Reynolds's niece, Mary Palmer, Burke wrote: "I have no party in this business my dear Miss Palmer, but

⁵ Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man* (Penguin Classics, 1969), p. 51.

⁶ Edmund Burke, *Correspondence*, Vol. V, p. 204, n. 6.

⁷ Undated letter, quoted in P. J. Marshall, *The Impeachment of Warren Hastings* (Oxford, 1965), p. 5.

⁸ Edmund Burke, letter of 23 November 1785, *Correspondence*, Vol. V, p. 240.

⁹ P. J. Marshall, *The Impeachment of Warren Hastings*, pp. 3, 10, 186. "Intellectual conviction", says Marshall, "is a much more cogent explanation than self-interest".

¹⁰ Edmund Burke, speech on Fox's Indian Bill, 1 December 1783, *Writings and Speeches*, pp. 390, 411. The reference is to the Christmas Season, and the Christian religion.

among a set of people who have none of your Lillies and Roses in their faces; but who are the images of the great Pattern as well as you and I. I know what I am doing; whether the white people like it or not. . . ."¹¹

Burke spoke of the Indians as "a people for ages civilized and cultivated; cultivated by all arts of polished life, while we were yet in the woods." In his speech opening the impeachment of Warren Hastings, Burke spoke on behalf of the peoples of India: ". . . Exiled and undone princes, extensive tribes, suffering nations, infinite descriptions of men, different in language, in manners and in rites, now separated by every barrier of Nature from you, by the Providence of God are blended in one common cause, and are now become suppliants at your bar." He called on the House of Lords "to respect a people as respectable as yourselves—a people who knows as well as you what is rank, what is law, what is property—a people who know what equity, what reason, what proportion in punishments; what security of property is, just as well as any of your Lordships".¹²

Burke's detestation of Warren Hastings was proportionate to the intensity of his sympathy with the peoples of India, whom he saw as the victims of an oppressive system, headed and animated by Hastings. Contemporaries "imperfectly susceptible" of sympathising with Indians were surprised by the vehemence and the depth of personal feeling in Burke's animosity.

On the subject of his personal feelings towards Hastings, Burke had to explain himself more than once; and not always perhaps with perfect consistency. Early on in 1784 he wrote to Lord Thurlow, to say why he was attacking Hastings:

"I am no enemy of that man—he never gave me cause directly or indirectly. I don't recollect that I have ever seen him, I am sure I never conversed with him. But of some things I am certain. I know that the Country under his care is sacked and pillaged, and I know he is the Government. . . ."

A little more than a year later, in his letter to Mary Palmer—the "Lillies and Roses" letter—he wrote of Hastings:

"I know him very well; though never having seen him, but in the dusk of one evening, in a walk with your uncle, and in the midst of a squadron; I am sure I could not distinguish his face; but I know him in his actions and in his writings. . . ."¹³

¹¹ Edmund Burke, letter to Mary Palmer, 19 January 1786, *Correspondence*, Vol. V, p. 255.

¹² Edmund Burke, speech on Fox's Indian Bill, *Writings and Speeches*, p. 389; Speech in Opening: First Day, 15 February 1788, *Works of Edmund Burke* (in twelve volumes: London, Nimmo, 1899), Vol. IX, p. 347.

¹³ Edmund Burke, letters of 18 December 1784 and 19 January 1786, *Correspondence*, Vol. V, pp. 204, 254-255. Mary Palmer's uncle, Joshua Reynolds, had painted Hastings's portrait in 1766.

¹⁴ Edmund Burke, Speech in General Reply: First Day, 28 May 1794, *Works*, Vol. XI, p. 179.

¹⁵ Edmund Burke, Speech in General Reply, First Day, 28 May 1794, and Speech in Reply, Eighth Day, June 1794, in *Works*, Vol. XI, p. 179, and Vol. XII, p. 277.

¹⁶ Edmund Burke, letter of 10 December 1785, *Correspondence*, Vol. V, p. 241.

Long afterwards, in his speech in reply, winding up the case for the impeachment, before the Lords, Burke acknowledges that he is motivated by what he calls "sympathetic revenge":

"Lord Bacon has very well said that 'revenge is a kind of wild justice'. It is so, and without this wild stock there would be no justice in the world. . . . The fruit of this wild stock is revenge regulated, but not extinguished—revenge transferred from the suffering party to the communion and sympathy of mankind. This is the revenge by which we are actuated and which we should be sorry, if the false, idle, girlish, novel-like morality of the world should extinguish in the breast of us who have a great public duty to perform."¹⁴

At a later stage in the same long speech, Burke frankly avows and justifies his hatred for Hastings:

"Some people say, you ought to hate the crime, and love the criminal. No, that is the language of false morality; you ought to hate the crime and the criminal, if the crime is of magnitude. If the crime is a small one then you ought to be angry with the crime and reluctant to punish the criminal; but when there are great crimes, then you may hate them together. What! am I to love Nero? to fall in love with Heliogabalus? Is Domitian to be the object of my affection? No, we hate the crime, and we hate the criminal ten times more; and if I use indignant language, if I use the language of scorn and horror with respect to the criminal I use the language that becomes me."¹⁵

Corruption & Oppression



BURKE DID NOT expect to succeed in impeaching Warren Hastings. Indeed he did not expect to get as far as he did. He thought the impeachment would never even go as far as the House of Lords; it would be thrown out by the Commons. It is to the Commons that Burke is referring when he writes to Philip Francis in 1785: "We know that we bring before a bribed tribunal a prejudged cause." The articles of charge in the impeachment were not drawn up in the best form for securing a conviction—"a thing we all knew to be impracticable"—but in the best form for making the maximum impact on public opinion, and generating support for reform in the system of government in India.¹⁶

Burke—like almost everyone else—was surprised when William Pitt came round to supporting impeachment in the Commons, so ensuring a majority for it there—while leaving the management of the impeachment, before the Lords, in the hands of a group of Opposition Members. Once the impeachment came before the Lords for adjudication, the essentially rhetorical format of the articles of charge became an embarrassment. The lawyers among the Lords were not impressed. It became clear that if the impeachment had to be

considered within the framework of the ordinary laws of evidence, as applied to the lower courts, then the impeachment would fail. Burke accordingly argued that different standards of evidence should apply. In opening the impeachment before the Lords (February 1788), Burke declared:

"It is by this tribunal that statesmen who abuse their power are accused by statesmen and tried by statesmen, not upon the niceties of a narrow jurisprudence, but upon the enlarged and solid principles of state morality."

Much later in the trial Burke argued this case at great length in the Report on the Lords Journals (1794). In the course of this Report, Burke claimed that

"the Lords ought to enlarge, and not to contract, the rules of evidence, according to the nature and difficulties of the case, for redress to the injured, for the punishment of oppression, for the detection of fraud—and above all to prevent, what is the greatest dishonour to all laws, and all tribunals, the failure of justice."¹⁷

Once that plea was rejected by the Lords, the acquittal of Warren Hastings became inevitable. It was impossible, in most cases, to obtain legal proofs of oppression in India.

That is not Burke's verdict, nor yet my own. It is, oddly enough, the verdict of Warren Hastings, in a report to his nominal superiors in London. Hastings wrote:

"In the charge of oppression, although supported by the cries of the people and the most authentic representations, it is yet impossible to obtain legal proofs of it."¹⁸

AS BOTH Burke and Hastings knew, it was impossible for Burke to *prove* his case against Hastings. But is it an impressive case, short of actual proof? Does the reader, having ploughed through all these volumes of speeches by Burke, and, the more meagre store of Hastings's replies, come to believe that Burke was by and large right, or alternatively that his charges were wide of the mark?

20th-century historians—perhaps understandably—seem unwilling to attempt an answer to such questions; generally, they sit on the fence. A favourite formula in reference to a particular charge is "unsubstantiated", a term which does not advance the debate. There is a tendency to attach weight to Hastings's professions of innocence, while showing less interest in, for example, his chronic inability to produce accounts. Sometimes, when one of Hastings's denials is extravagantly improbable, a historian may gag a little. Thus, on

the Nobkissen affair, P. J. Marshall writes: "But if the imputation of bribery remains unproven, it was unfortunate, to say the least, that [Hastings] should have accepted a loan from Nobkissen, which soon became a present, when appointing him to a most valuable office."¹⁹ "To say the least". . . .

Where definite proof is lacking, opinions of the transactions have to be subjective. It seems to me that, on a commonsense reading of the charges and the replies, the charges seem more likely to be well-founded than the replies do. The main burden of Burke's charges against Hastings is that Hastings was in the habit of selling to the highest bidder the right to tax, and that this practice resulted in vicious extortion and oppression. As Burke writes:

"On a transient view, bribery is rather a subject of disgust than horror—the sordid practice of a venal, mean, and abject mind; and the effect of the crime seems to end with the act. It looks to be no more than the corrupt transfer of property from one person to another—at worst a theft. But it will appear in a very different light, when you regard the consideration for which the bribe is given—namely, that a Governor-General, claiming an arbitrary power in himself, for that consideration delivers up the properties, the liberties, and the lives of a whole people to the arbitrary discretion of any wicked and rapacious person, who will be sure to make good from their blood the purchase he has paid for his power over them. It is possible that a man may pay a bribe merely to redeem himself from some evil. It is bad, however, to live under a power whose violence has no restraint except in its avarice. But no man ever paid a bribe for a power to charge and tax others, but with a view to oppress them. No man ever paid a bribe for the handling of the public money, but to peculate from it. When once such offices become thus privately and corruptly venal, the very worst men will be chosen (as Mr Hastings has in fact constantly chosen the very worst); because none but those who do not scruple the use of any means are capable, consistently with profit, to discharge at once the rigid demands of a severe public revenue and the private bribes of a rapacious chief magistrate. Not only the worst men will be thus chosen, but they will be restrained by no dread whatsoever in the execution of their worst oppressions. Their protection is sure. The authority that is to restrain, to control, to punish them is previously engaged; he has his retaining fee for the support of their crimes. Mr Hastings never dared, because he could not, arrest oppression in its course, without drying up the source of his own corrupt emolument. Mr Hastings never dared, after the fact, to punish extortion in others, because he could not, without risking discovery of bribery in himself. The same corruption, the same oppression, and the same impunity will reign through all the subordinate gradations."²⁰

In the long course of the impeachment, Burke adduced a mass of detail, in particular instances, in support of that general charge. The picture is remarkably consistent. Hastings's replies, on particular issues, appear in comparison random and perfunctory.

¹⁷ Edmund Burke, Speech in opening the impeachment, First Day, 15 February 1788, *Works*, Vol. IX, p. 333; Report on the Lords Journals, 30 April 1794, *Works*, Vol. XI, p. 64.

¹⁸ Company Minutes 2827-2829, cited by Burke in his Speech in Reply, Eighth Day, *Works*, Vol. XII, p. 291. Hastings was seeking "discretionary power", for himself, to deal with charges against officials.

¹⁹ P. J. Marshall, *Impeachment of Warren Hastings*, p. 151.

²⁰ Edmund Burke, Speech in Opening, Fourth Day, *Works*, Vol. X, pp. 138-39.

OBVIOUSLY IT WOULD BE impossible, in the course of a single essay, to explore the vast ramifications of the whole impeachment. I take just one instance, the most sensational and perhaps the most damning against Hastings: the case of Maharajah Nuncomar (more properly Nandakuma, but I shall stick to the form used by Burke).

Burke's charge against Hastings, in the matter of Nuncomar, appeared outrageous to many British contemporaries. Burke was censured by the House of Commons (4 May 1789) for having said in the course of the impeachment that Hastings murdered Nuncomar by the hands of Sir Elijah Impey.²¹ Burke felt obliged, as he said, to make some apology (although it wasn't much of an apology). Yet Macaulay in 1841, more than 50 years later, in his essay "Warren Hastings", concluded from his deep knowledge of India that Burke had been right (although Macaulay was in general an admirer of Hastings). And evidence subsequently available strongly tends to confirm the judgment of Burke and Macaulay.

Nuncomar, relying on the support of an India Company Council majority then hostile to Hastings, brought a number of charges against him, accusing him of putting offices up for sale, receiving bribes, etc. But before the charges could be heard, Nuncomar was himself charged with forgery. As Macaulay writes: "The ostensible prosecutor was a native. But it was then, and still is, the opinion of everybody, idiots and biographers excepted, that Hastings was the real mover in the business. . . ." (Understandably, Hastings's subsequent biographers have all been disposed to be dismissive about Macaulay's essay.)

The court which tried Nuncomar was presided over by Sir Elijah Impey, an old friend of Hastings, and devoted to his interests. The court not only found Nuncomar guilty, but sentenced him to death. Under the laws of England at that time forgery was a capital offence, and Impey decided that English law on that point applied in India. Nuncomar was hanged, and no further accusations were ever made against Hastings by any native of India.

Hastings's familiars, in their private communications, made no secret of the connection between the death of Nuncomar and the stopping of the mouths of Hastings's accusers. John Stewart, Secretary of Bengal and a member of Hastings's official "family", compared Hastings's accusers to the *Delatores* of Nero's reign, and wrote: "I do not . . . really believe the *Delatores* will come out very thick till they see how [Nuncomar's] ears hang on his head, that is to say, if he is not hung up head and tail and ears and all before the other is decided."²²

"The other" was, of course, the charges against Hastings. Stewart was writing *before* Nuncomar's execution. *After* the execution, another enthusiastic supporter of Hastings wrote:

²¹ Edmund Burke, Speech on the Sixth Article, Third Day, *Works*, Vol. X, p. 311.

²² Quoted in Lucy Sutherland, "New Evidence in the Nandakuma Trial", in *Politics and Finance in the Eighteenth Century* (ed. Newman, 1984), pp. 244-45.

²³ E. Sherwin to J. Graham, 25 August 1775, quoted in P. J. Marshall, *Impeachment of Warren Hastings*, p. 141; Edmund Burke, *Works*, Vol. X, p. 30.

"With the life of [Nuncomar] has ended the prevalent spirit of informants and the litigious . . . the Blacks know not which way to look; everyone cautious and reserved. The change which the execution has worked is easily perceived and felt [by] the different ranks of the inhabitants in this settlement—and I hope they may continue in their timid disposition."

Or, as Burke put it:

"Mr Hastings observes, that no man in India complains of him. It is generally true. The voice of India is stopped. All complaint was strangled with the same cord that strangled Nuncomar."²³

The execution of Nuncomar was in fact a major political coup, of the type which Machiavelli admired in Cesare Borgia. Hastings himself appears as a Machiavellian hero: cool, far-sighted in planning, prompt in action, decisive, unscrupulous, and ruthless. Burke was consistent in cherishing an equal detestation both for Machiavelli and for Hastings.

Burke's impeachment of Hastings failed in a technical and legal sense. But in a wider sense, and in the sense of Burke's original intent, it did not fail. It changed the methods of governing India. General Cornwallis, as Hastings's successor, never criticised Hastings or corroborated Burke, but he brought to an end many of the abuses which Burke had accused Hastings of preserving. To quote the verdict of the *Oxford History of India* on the impeachment of Hastings:

"Though the faults of many lesser men transcended those of Hastings as his ability exceeded theirs, it was fitting that the responsibility for misgovernment and acts of high-handedness should be fixed upon the head rather than on lesser men. . . . The arraignment of Hastings and the ending of all his further prospects gave warning to the Company's servants in general that no lesser man could expect his actions to go without scrutiny or his faults without reproof."

The Malign Enchanter



CONTEMPORARIES were puzzled by the depth of Edmund Burke's sympathy with the natives of India, a country which he had never visited. I believe, as I suggested earlier, that a clue lies in the nature of Burke's Irish origins.

Burke's mother's people, the Nagles of the Blackwater Valley in County Cork, were Irish Catholic gentry, and so victims of the Penal Laws which were at their worst when Burke was born, in 1729. Unlike the Lords and Commons whom he was addressing, Burke knew in his bones what oppression was like. He had experience of it through his mother's family, and his wife's family, and possibly through his father as well.

Burke's father, Richard Burke, was a member of the Established Anglican Church—the Church of Ireland—when Edmund was born; and Edmund was brought up a member of that Church. But it is possible, though not certain, that Richard Burke had originally been a Catholic, and had conformed to the Established Church, in order to be allowed to practise the law, as many Catholics did. A Richard Burke did conform at the relevant time, in 1722; and there is a family tradition that Burke's father had been a Catholic. Burke's passionate resentment of the treatment of Irish Catholics finds copious expression throughout his writings.²⁴ His sympathy with the natives of India—on his discovery of the excations and oppressions of which they had been victims—kindles more readily than was the case with others whose life experience had been more privileged.

Yet it should not be assumed that the Irish background suffices *in itself* to explain Burke's sympathy with the Indians. Many people who resent the oppression of their own kind are, at best, indifferent to the oppression of others; and this is as true of Irish people as of any others. But Edmund Burke was a person with an exceptionally wide capacity for human sympathy, unaffected by the racial considerations which made so many others "imperfectly susceptible" of such sympathy. Addressing the House of Commons in 1783, Burke spoke of "the covenant . . . in which I am bound . . . to the whole human race."²⁵ A number of those present could have had no idea what Burke was talking about. This was the speech that was punctuated by the laughter of the young Members.

BURKE'S FAMILY experience of oppression, combined with his unusual capacity for enlarged sympathy for other oppressed peoples, produced the passion that drove on the impeachment of Warren Hastings. I do not doubt that a repressed and consciously-repudiated ancestral Irish-Catholic rejection of English domination—underlying a *conscious* rejection of the Protestant Ascendancy which rested on English domination—found a legitimate target in Warren Hastings as the unacceptable face of English domination. Burke's language, often so vehement as to defeat his purposes, seems to reflect a compulsive psychic force of this kind. Burke's insistence on revenge, even "sympathetic revenge", as he explains it—as among the motives of the impeachment—and his insistence also on avowing his hatred for the man he was impeaching, cannot have helped his case. They must have contributed to the widespread impression that Warren Hastings was being unfairly hounded. But clearly these were things that Burke needed to get off his chest, whether they helped his case or not.

²⁴ See my introductions to the Pelican edition of Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1968), p. 29 and *passim*, and to the Hutchinson Education edition of *Letters, Speeches, and Tracts on Irish Affairs* by Edmund Burke collected and arranged by Matthew Arnold (1988).

²⁵ Edmund Burke, Speech on Fox's India Bill, 1 December 1783, *Writings and Speeches*, Vol. V, p. 425.

²⁶ Edmund Burke, Speech in Reply, Fourth Day, 5 June 1794, *Works*, Vol. XI, p. 381, 413.

Major John Scott, Hastings's agent in the Commons, took note of what he called "Burke's vile Irish brogue". This may have been more than a mere ethnic slur. Scott may have been responding, with instinctive hostility, to an indication of a source for Burke's extreme animus against Scott's master—Warren Hastings.

YET I SHOULD NOT like to end with an exclusive emphasis on the irrational or pre-rational drives behind Burke's pursuit of Hastings. There *was* a solid basis for the impeachment of Warren Hastings, and the impeachment resulted in solid benefits for the people of India, as the *Oxford History* attests. But Burke could probably not have summoned up the energies necessary for the Herculean task of the impeachment, had he not been able to draw on the passions generated by his Irish heritage. These passions included hatred and revenge against English oppression, and against Hastings personally as an archetypal English oppressor. They also included a warm sympathy with the victims of oppression in India. This was not an affected sympathy assumed in order to do down Hastings, as appears to have been the case with such store of sympathy as Philip Francis possessed. Burke's sympathy with the oppressed Indians is so clearly genuine as to evoke the respect even of historians who (like P. J. Marshall) are not particularly impressed by Burke's case against Hastings.

In Burke's "great melody", Warren Hastings is an exceptional figure: the only personal villain of any stature. There is nothing corresponding to him in evil even among the Jacobins, still less in the Protestant "junta" in Ireland, or among those who misgoverned the Americans. Hastings alone *personifies* the evil about which Burke writes elsewhere, usually in general and collective terms: he towers over India as a malign enchanter. Speaking of "the ground on which Mr Hastings stood", Burke says:

"Your Lordships will find it a fairy land, in which there is a perpetual masquerade, where no one thing appears as it really is—where the person who seems to have the authority is a slave—while the person who seems to be the slave has the authority. In that ambiguous government everything favours fraud, everything favours speculation, everything favours violence, everything favours concealment. . . ."

And Burke felt, as the impeachment drew to a close, that he had exposed the enchanter and broken the spell:

"You now see [he told the Lords] by what secret movement the master of the mechanism has conducted the great Indian opera—an opera of fraud, deception and harlequin tricks. You have it all laid open before you. The ostensible scene is drawn aside. All the strutting signors, and all the soft signoras are gone; and instead of a brilliant spectacle of descending chariots, gods, goddesses, sun, moon and stars, you have nothing to gaze on but sticks, wires and machinery."²⁶

As I read that passage, I was reminded of the stage direc-

tion for the dénouement in Milton's *Comus*: "The Brothers rush in with swords drawn, wrest [the enchanter's] glass out of his hand and dash it to the ground." Yet Burke's enchanter, like Milton's, was fated to make his escape—though not without paying a price.

The Lords were probably more irritated than impressed by Burke's metaphors. Yet the metaphors in their context form an apt, if strange, comment on the transactions which Burke has been analysing; the pretences of indirect rule were indeed elaborate, sumptuous, and often noxious. A contemporary critic dismissed one of Burke's speeches as "like most of this

ingenious author's works addressed more to the imagination than to the understanding".²⁷

But, in fact, Burke in all his major writings and speeches—not least those on Warren Hastings—addresses himself *both* to the understanding and to the imagination; not simultaneously but alternately. This is what makes Burke's great melody unique in its combination of political insight and literary power.

Warren Hastings, having left the scene of his own "great Indian opera", is subsumed into Burke's "great melody", in a role equivalent to the Mozartian Queen of the Night. Burke may have wrecked Hastings's life; but, in recompense, he has conferred on Hastings a species of immortality.

²⁷ Quoted in *Writings and Speeches*, p. 451 n.

No Man's Land: Portrait of Hilda Carline

A difficult woman
—slept, ate at the wrong times,
was deaf to crying babies,
awkward when elegance was wanted.

She withheld applause; was adamant
in her own too angular opinions.
Here, she is treated harshly,
uglier than she was.

No mother in this nature, no repose,
no contours lavishly displayed,
curve of lush flank,
promise in an eye's glint;

rather, obstinacy, flint,
cheeks planed by rock-falls;
uncompromised by flattery,
even the hair hard-furrowed,

eyes, obsidian, shadowed
in outcrop of brow, nose chiselled
straighter than life, petrified
in rage-red symmetry.

Her jaw describes the geometry
of will—as though
it could only crack, spew
the grief of decades into chill air

or, cleansed of flesh, made bare,
all passionate resistance over,
winds might sing through orifice of bone
their wild, impersonal plain-chant.

Carole Satyamurti

(Hilda Carline was the first wife of Stanley Spencer. A portrait of her by her brother, Richard Carline, hangs in the Tate Gallery.)

NOTES & TOPICS

A Treacherous Quotation

E. M. Foster, Dante, & Treason—By D. A. LONGLEY



E. M. FORSTER exercised an extraordinary influence over what has been called “the Cambridge Comintern”.¹ Guy Burgess in particular “had been so moved by Forster’s revealing article in the *London Mercury* [in 1939] . . . that he would recite parts of it to anyone within ear-shot”. In 1946, “The only writer he idolised personally was the novelist E. M. Forster, who still seemed to exert a powerful spell on him”. And, in the 1950s, the one thing that he was apparently proud of in his otherwise squalid exile in the USSR “was of having persuaded his bureaucratic masters that the novels of E. M. Forster and Graham Greene deserved to be translated into Russian. . . .”² Goronwy Rees writes that, in 1951, when he told Anthony Blunt about Burgess and Maclean’s flight to Moscow, Blunt’s reaction was to quote from the very article by Forster that had so moved Burgess in 1939.³ The article in question was, of course, “What I Believe”, and the key phrase (which Burgess and Blunt liked to repeat) was:

“. . . if I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend, I hope I should have the guts to betray my country.”⁴

There is some irony in their choice of this passage to justify

their conduct, as it is based on Forster’s misreading of a passage from *Dante’s Divine Comedy*.

“What I Believe” was republished during the War in an anthology of *The Personal Philosophies of Twenty-three Eminent Men and Women of our Time*, and again after the War in Forster’s *Two Cheers for Democracy*, the title of which is in fact taken from the article in question. The much-cited phrase appears in this context:

“I hate the idea of causes, and if I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend, I hope I should have the guts to betray my country. Such a choice may scandalise the modern reader, and he may stretch out his patriotic hand to the telephone at once and ring up the police. It would not have shocked Dante though. Dante places Brutus and Cassius in the lowest circle of Hell because they had chosen to betray their friend Julius Caesar rather than their country Rome.”

Dante is a curious writer to evoke in support of a rejection of causes, since he despised people without causes as

. . . *la setta de’ cattivi*
a Dio spiacenti ed a’ nemici suoi.
Questi sciaurati, che mai non fur vivi.

(. . . *that rabble, here without a doubt,*
Whom God and whom His enemies despised.
This scum, who’d never lived. . .)⁵

In Dante’s scheme of things, the Forsters without a cause do not even make it into Hell, but remain eternally in the Vestibule of the Futile, where they rush hither and thither with the same futility they had shown in life. He could never have conceived of the words of such a person being used to justify a major decision for good or evil.

In Hell itself, Dante has three categories of sin: sins of incontinence; sins of violence; and sins of malice or fraud. Although all sin involves injustice to others, sins of malice or fraud are by far the most serious, for whereas man is swept away by his passions to commit sins of incontinence or violence, fraud involves the use of reason, the faculty unique to man. It is, therefore, punished in the two deepest circles of Hell (*Inferno*, xi, 22-27).

D’ogni malizia ch’odio in cielo acquista,
ingiuria è ’l fine, ed ogni fin cotale

¹ The phrase is used by Robert Cecil to apply to Burgess, Maclean, Philby and Blunt. Robert Cecil, “The Cambridge Comintern”, in *The Missing Dimension*, edited by Christopher Andrew and David Dilks (1984), pp. 169-198. See also Robert Cecil’s article in *ENCOUNTER*, “Legends Spies Tell” (April 1978).

² Andrew Boyle, *The Climate of Treason: Five who Spied for Russia* (1979), pp. 181, 283, 447.

³ Goronwy Rees, *A Chapter of Accidents* (1972), p. 208. Rees does not identify Blunt as the person concerned, but Boyle does (p. 384).

⁴ *I Believe: The Personal Philosophies of Twenty-Three Eminent Men and Women of our Time* (1942), p. 97; E. M. Forster, *Two Cheers for Democracy* (1951), p. 78.

⁵ *Inferno*, iii, 62-64; the English translations are from Dante, *The Divine Comedy, 1: Hell*, translated by Dorothy L. Sayers (1949). I shall use this translation throughout. Canto and line references are the same as for the Italian original.

*o con forza o con frode altrui contrista.
Ma perché frode è dell'uom proprio male,
più spiace a Dio; e però stan di sotto
i frodolenti e più dolor li assale.*

*(Of all malicious wrong that earns Heaven's hate
The end is injury; all such ends are won
Either by force or fraud. Both perpetrate
Evil to others; but since man alone
Is capable of fraud, God hates that worst;
The fraudulent lie lowest, then, and groan
Deepest.)*

IN TURN, FRAUD of all kinds is divided into two categories: fraud against those who had a special reason to trust the defrauders, and fraud against humanity in general (xi, 52-54).

*La frode, ond'ogni coscienza è morsa,
può l'uomo usare in colui che 'n lui fida
ed in quel che fidanza non imborsa.*

*(Fraud, which gnaws every conscience, may be a breach
Of trust against the confiding, or deceive
Such as repose no confidence.)*

Of these, the first is the more terrible, since it involves not merely destroying the general bond of love for mankind that is natural to men, but the special trust given from individual to individual.

THE NINTH CIRCLE OF HELL, to which the treacherous are confined, has four divisions. At first sight, these appear to confirm E. M. Forster's view. The first, named *Caina* after Cain, is reserved for those who have betrayed their kinsmen; the second, named *Antenora* after Antenor (the betrayer of Troy to the Greeks), is for those who have betrayed their country. These are lesser acts of treachery than those that follow, for no one can choose his kin or his country. The third and fourth divisions of the ninth circle punish those whose treachery has been against a chosen allegiance. *Ptolemaea*, named either after Ptolemy the captain of Jericho (who invited the High Priest Simon and his sons to a banquet, where he killed them) or after the brother of Cleopatra (who gave refuge to Pompey only to kill him), is reserved for those treacherous to guests. The last section, *Judecca*, named after Judas, is reserved for the treacherous to their rightful masters and benefactors.

Betrayal of one's country, then, does appear to be less se-

verely condemned by Dante than betrayal of one's friend, if guests and benefactors are seen to represent friends. But this can only be sustained by a superficial view of the formal layout of the ninth circle, by removing it, as I have just done, from Dante's overall concept of Hell.

Fraud, after all, is punished in two circles, the eighth and the ninth, and the difference between them is great. The eighth circle, which punishes the panders and seducers, flatterers, simoniacs, sorcerers, traffickers in public office, hypocrites, thieves, evil counsellors, schismatics and falsifiers, is divided into ten concentric ditches, separated by high embankments, in which each fraud is given a different punishment, and is itself a microcosm of Hell, with the sins of incontinence and violence aggravated by the addition of reason.

Thus, where the first circle of Hell is for the lustful, the first *bolgia* of the eighth circle is for panders and seducers and so on. On the face of it, this should complete the picture of Hell, yet there still remains one circle: the ninth, that reserved for traitors. Dante goes to great lengths to separate it from the rest of Hell. It is very much deeper than the eighth circle. It is the pit at the very bottom of Hell, whose entrance is guarded by giants. All this is to stress that treachery is, in Dante's eyes, the worst sin of all, set apart from all others. Its guardians, the giants, symbolise "that pride that cannot brook the sovereignty of God" and the "blind forces—great blocks of primitive mass-emotion" which are all that remain when the intellect has been wholly perverted.⁶

The ninth circle is different from the rest of Hell in a number of ways. Whereas the rest of Hell is hot, the ninth circle is cold, a frozen sea of ice⁷ which holds the souls of the treacherous. This symbolises both the freezing of the conscience that accompanies treachery, and the absence of love, the emotion more than any other associated with warmth. Furthermore, the divisions inside the ninth circle are minimal. They are suggested rather than described, and the punishments for three of the four categories of traitors are so similar as to have provoked much discussion among scholars as to where the differences lie. The main differences are how far into the ice the souls are pushed, and whether their faces are turned upwards, so that the tears freeze in their eyes, or downwards so that they can still weep. In the third division, *Ptolemaea*, the zone of the treacherous to guests (friends?), there is the added punishment that the soul leaves the body for Hell at the moment the sin is committed, while the body lives on above, inhabited by a demon.

THE ONE MAJOR division in the ninth circle is between the *Judecca* and the rest. This zone apparently contains only four sinners. So great has been the sin that only four have been wicked enough to commit it. It consists of Satan himself, frozen into the ice from the waist down. In a horrible parody of the Trinity, he has three heads, and the mouth of each head consumes eternally the soul of those guilty of the greatest sin of all: Judas, Brutus, and Cassius.

This is normally described as treachery to a benefactor—or, as E. M. Forster would have it, betrayal of a friend. This is the bathetic view possible only to a man without belief, living in a secular age. For the four prisoners of the *Judecca*

⁶ See Joan M. Ferrante, *The Political Vision of the Divine Comedy* (1984), pp. 167ff.; J. S. Carroll, *Exiles of Eternity: An Exposition of Dante's Inferno* (1903), p. 424; Dorothy Sayers, *Introductory Papers on Dante* (1969), p. 147.

⁷ An added irony for 20th-century readers is that, in order to evoke the coldness of the ninth circle, Dante uses Slavonic place names and sounds—an irony much appreciated by the Russian poet Osip Mandelstam, who died in one of Stalin's camps in 1938. See O. Mandelstam, "Razgovor o Dante", in *id*, *Sobranie Sochinenii*, 2 (New York, 1971), pp. 400-401.

ca are all guilty of treachery to God: Satan betrayed God in His own person; Judas betrayed him in his incarnation as Christ; and Brutus and Cassius betrayed him in the person of the founder of the Roman Empire, which was, in Dante's eyes, the monarchy divinely ordained to establish civilisation and the rule of law, and do God's will on earth.

THUS, DESPITE E. M. Foster, Dante would have been shocked at the idea of betraying one's country, and did not distinguish greatly between that and betraying one's friend. For him, the great difference lay between the cold sin of treachery and all the others; and this difference is brought out again when Dante arrives in Purgatory. The last people he has seen in Hell are the traitors to God: Satan, Judas, Brutus, and Cassius. The first person he meets in Purgatory is Cato, who fought against Caesar along with Brutus and Cassius. However, where they did so covertly, while accepting privilege and preference from Caesar, Cato did so openly, ultimately preferring death by his own hand to the betrayal of his principles. Dante's description of him (*Purgatorio*, i, 31-33, 71-74) is markedly different from that of Brutus and Cassius.

*vidi presso di me un veglio solo,
degno di tanta reverenza in vista,
che più non dee a padre alcun figliuolo. . . .
. . . libertà va cercando, ch'è sì cara,
come sa chi per lei vita rifiuta
Tu'l sai, che non ti fu per lei amara
in Utica la morte. . . .*

*(And saw hard by me an old man alone,
Whose reverend mien commanded such respect,
No father could deserve more from a son. . . .
. . . 'Tis liberty he seeks—how dear a thing
That is, they know who gave their lives for it;
Thou know'st: for thee this passion drew death's sting
in Utica. . . .)*

Dante, then, does not condemn opposition to the state, even that misguided enough to be opposed to the empire destined to do God's work on earth. Cato is "worthy of reverence" not only because of the honourable and open nature of his opposition, but because this was freely chosen; and he freely accepted death rather than what he saw as tyranny. This pre-

paredness to accept the consequences of one's choice again contrasts with the behaviour of the souls of the treacherous—who, even in Hell, blame everyone but themselves for their present condition. The separateness of treachery is made complete by the first ledge of Purgatory, which is where penitents must be purged of the sin of pride, for until this is done no progress towards Grace is possible. Thus Treachery is sharply divided from all other conditions: in Hell by the giants of Pride; in Purgatory by Pride's purging.

IT IS DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE that, had the members of "the Cambridge Comintern" read Dante rather than E. M. Forster's rendering of him, they would have found much comfort. Indeed, it is surprising that they were much comforted by Forster, since they seem to have been quite prepared also to betray their friends when the need arose.

Thus, Guy Burgess invited Donald Maclean to an orgy in his flat in Bentinck Street in 1941, and warned him afterwards that he now had compromising photographs of him naked in the arms of another man, and would use them should Maclean show any signs of abandoning the "Comintern" (an incident that makes it difficult to agree with Sir Frederick Warner's view that "friendship mattered a lot" to Burgess.⁸) Blunt's refusal to name those of his fellow-traitors who had not (and still apparently have not) been identified, despite his acceptance of a Royal pardon on condition that he should do just that, could charitably be ascribed to loyalty to his friends rather than to KGB training.⁹ He none the less continuously betrayed those friends (like Tess Rothschild) who protected him when he was under suspicion, because they genuinely believed him to be innocent.¹⁰ They all, like Brutus, betrayed their benefactor, even if we take this at its most literal meaning. All of them were privileged; all were accorded rank and trust by the system they betrayed. None chose Cato's path of honourable opposition; and (as Robert Cecil remarks) it was pride that motivated them, for

" . . . alongside their social conscience, ran a powerful strain of élitism . . . All four men were fully conscious of their abilities and potentialities; not for them the long mornings on the street corner, selling the Daily Worker, nor the dreary meetings with the comrades, adopting resolutions".

PERHAPS DANTE would have seen, in the drunkenness and despair of their later years, proof that their souls had already left their bodies for *Ptolomea*. In any case, he would have seen their lives as evidence that Treachery is indivisible, and that one sort slides imperceptibly into another. For, in the last analysis, the choice for Dante was not between "betraying his friends" and "his country", between the *Ptolomea* and *Antenora*. Such a choice would have been meaningless to him, and quite contrary to the whole theme of the *Divine Comedy*. The fact that Forster poses this choice reveals the extent to which he misunderstood Dante's purpose. For Dante, the only true choice was between betrayal and honour, Brutus and Cato, evil and good, Satan and God.

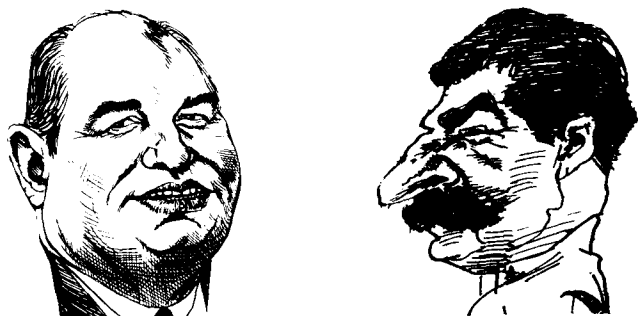
⁸ Andrew Boyle, *The Climate of Treason*, pp. 213, 283.

⁹ After Peter Wright had interrogated Blunt for a year, he knew that Blunt must know of Soviet spies still active in Britain, but "although Blunt, under pressure, expanded his information, it always pointed at those who were either dead, long since retired, or else comfortably out of secret access and danger. . . ." Peter Wright, *Spycatcher* (1987), p. 251.

¹⁰ "Tess was well aware of MI5's doubts about Blunt after the Burgess-Maclean defections, but she defended him to the hilt. Both she and her husband, Victor, knew how it felt to be innocent, yet fall under suspicion through having been friendly with Guy Burgess. To her, Blunt was a vulnerable and wonderfully gifted man, cruelly exposed to the everlasting burden of suspicion by providence and the betrayals of Guy Burgess. . . ." Wright, p. 215.

The Bald & the Hairy

By Vladimir Voinovich



THE SOVIET SYSTEM is one of the world's greatest mysteries. It has already existed for 70 years, but thus far nobody has been able to define what it is. Some say that it is a Marxist society. Others claim that it has nothing in common with Marxism. Some insist that it is Socialism. Others call it State Capitalism, or even Feudalism.

There are many arguments about the origins of Soviet aggressiveness—does it spring from Communist doctrine, or is it a manifestation of age-old Russian Imperialism?

But perhaps the greatest controversy of all surrounds the custom of dividing the Soviet leaders into Hawks and Doves. At some time in the past, somebody dreamed up this idea; and since then, year after year, we have had pronouncements on which Soviet politicians belong to the first group of feathered fowl and which to the second—the state of relations between them, the nature of their disagreements, and the direction that Soviet policy should take as a result.

The process occupies the attention of Western Intelligence Services, Ministries, University Departments, and Research Centres. Thousands of highly paid Sovietologists peer into the faces of the Soviet leaders and scrutinise their hour-long inarticulate speeches, searching between the lines for hints of a “dovish” or “hawkish” trend of thought. With joy and hope their eyes light upon a coat tailored by Dior or Cardin. They go into raptures when they observe that the Soviet leader's wife has paid for a necklace with an American Express card, and they create delightful legends about her husband spending his leisure hours listening to the Beatles, reading Jacqueline Susann (or Susan Sontag) in the original, and generally affecting Western ways.

ALL THIS VAST AMOUNT of Sovietological research is a total waste of time, because the distribution of forces in the top Soviet echelons can be determined at a glance if my neat and only correct methodology is used and the Kremlin rulers are divided not into Doves and Hawks but the Bald and the Hairy.

Bald and Hairy leaders alternate in the Kremlin with amaz-

ing regularity. Lenin was bald, Stalin was hairy—Khrushchev was bald, Brezhnev was hairy—Andropov was bald, Chernenko was hairy—and as for Gorbachov, everybody has seen his bald head on television.

From this truly revolutionary and fundamental discovery a number of definite patterns can be drawn. All the Bald leaders (Lenin, Khrushchev, Andropov, and Gorbachov) have been revolutionaries or, at least, reformers. All the Hairy ones have been reactionaries.

All the Bald ones have had utopian goals and ultimately suffered defeat. Lenin wanted to build Communism but failed. Khrushchev intended to sow the entire USSR with corn, to overtake the United States in production of meat and milk, and to build Communism. He achieved neither the first, the second, nor the third. Andropov set out to strengthen discipline and raise labour productivity, but did not succeed. How will Gorbachov's efforts be rewarded? This remains to be seen. But the experiences of his predecessors inspire little confidence.

The Hairy, on the other hand, have always achieved what they wanted. Stalin wanted to turn the Soviet Union into a superpower, which he did. Brezhnev wanted to be a Marshal and a writer; he became both. When Chernenko came to power, he had only one wish—to be buried on Red Square. He is.

The Bald ones left behind them nothing but problems. In effect, far from strengthening the existing system, they shook it to its foundations, and the Hairy ones had their task cut out to minimise the consequences of their destructive activities. Lenin created a party of revolutionaries with whose help he destroyed an empire. Stalin spent 30 years of his life destroying Lenin's party, re-establishing the empire in its former frontiers, and even extending those frontiers. Khrushchev laboured for ten years to re-establish Leninist norms, while Brezhnev spent eighteen years re-establishing Stalinist norms. Andropov managed to do very little, so Chernenko's historical mission was a brief one.

THEN THAT TRULY outstanding reformer Mikhail Sergeevich Gorbachov came to power. He set to work with a will, and in very few years has stirred things up as much as Khrushchev managed to do in an entire decade. Gorbachov is promising to restructure Soviet society, to make it dynamic, economically powerful, democratic, viable, and peace-loving. Many of his plans enjoy the sympathy of various people, and I am all in favour of them and hope that they will come to something. But when I think about the prospects, I have to bear in mind that Gorbachov is not the one-man ruler of the Soviet Union. He has his colleagues and assistants. I consider what sort of men the leaders of the CPSU are and take a good look at their portraits. And my observations are these.

Within the Politburo, the baldest after Gorbachov is that active restructurer and reformer Aleksandr Yakovlev. Careful examination reveals some encouraging gaps in Eduard Shevardnadze's curls; it is impossible to call him Bald, but he

is certainly thinning. Quite recently, Viktor Nikonov was elected a full member of the Politburo, and he too can, at a pinch, be placed in the same category. The remaining members of the Politburo—Vorotnikov, Medvedev, Zaikov, Ligachev, Ryzhkov, Slyunkov, Chebrikov, and Shcherbitsky—are all amply endowed with hair.

Bear in mind that the more hair they have, the more reactionary they are. A balance can be drawn up: two bald, two thinning, and eight hairy. The position of the bald ones is even more shaky if the candidate members of the Politburo are taken into account. All but one of them have plenty of hair. (There was, of course, the more or less bald Minister of Defence, Marshal Sokolov, but he had to leave his post as a result of the long-haired Mathias Rust's exploit of landing a West German plane in Red Square.)

IGOR LIGACHEV is the main spokesman for the Hairy. His style of thinking is fully in accord with the density of his hair. At one moment he is calling on writers to create more vivid models of Communism (as if there were not enough such vivid examples already); at another he is pouncing on the newspaper *Moscow News* for its obituary of Viktor Nekrasov who died in the emigration. In general, he sighs nostalgically for the days of stagnation under Brezhnev, which seem to have been for him a most interesting and productive period. And speeches quite out of keeping with the age of restructuring and *glasnost* are delivered by Viktor Chebrikov. Despite a very high forehead, he certainly belongs to the Hairies.

In short, although the influence of the Bald is very considerable, the Hairy are now in the overwhelming majority. And this means that it is necessary to be cautious.

I MUST ADMIT that I am not bald yet either, but I am on the side of the Bald and hope that they ultimately become a majority. I do not, however, know how this is to be achieved. To select leading cadres on the basis of their degree of baldness is undemocratic, and smacks of discrimination. Pulling out hair is painful. Shaving the head in the manner of certain rock stars is useless—hair grows rather fast. So I fear it is practically impossible to change the situation. Nevertheless, by observing the balance between the Bald and the Hairy within the Soviet leadership, it should be quite possible to forecast scientifically the probable direction of Soviet policy in the short term.

I dare say that from now on my modest discovery will become an indispensable aid for Western leaders, diplomats, bankers, industrialists, businessmen, and Sovietologists. I hope that those conducting negotiations in the Soviet Union on disarmament, the construction of gas pipelines, the granting of credits, and the expansion of cultural exchanges will be guided by my research. They must pay attention to the state of the Soviet leaders' hair-styles. Only then should they make important decisions. Beware of the Hairy; watch out for the Bald.

Paris Notebook

By Jean-François Revel

Annenkov's Picture



HOW MANY French *chefs-d'oeuvre* have come down to us as unexpected gifts from the past! Remember that Pascal's *Pensées*, de Chamfort's *Maximes*, and the *Mémoires* of Cardinal de Retz and of Saint-Simon were all posthumous works. The Diderot we read today is nothing like the one his contemporaries read, for *Jacques le Fataliste* was not published until 12 years after its author's death, while *Le Neveu de Rameau* did not

appear until 1805, another 9 years later—and then in a German translation by Goethe, made from a manuscript found in the library of Catherine the Great.

Literature conceals these surprises in the closets of time, rather as a good grandmother hides Christmas toys in a "present-drawer" that the children are not allowed to open. Yuri Annenkov's novel, *La Révolution derrière la porte*,¹ is one such unexpected gift, though it was published in Russian—in the West—as early as 1934. At the time, however, its circulation was restricted to confidential emigrant *milieux*. Not that Annenkov was a White Russian; on the contrary, as the official painter of the Bolshevik Revolution and portraitist by appointment to Lenin, he was thoroughly Red. But he soon "whitened" when he saw the way the new régime was going, and in 1924 he decided to leave for the West. In France he became a successful theatre and film designer, collaborating with Max Ophuls on *La Ronde* and *Lola Montes*. When he died in Paris in 1974 very few people, even among the handful of readers of the Russian edition of *La révolution derrière la porte*, knew that he was its author because he had published the book under the pseudonym of B. Tamiriazhev. Michel Heller's preface relates the amazing vicissitudes—almost worthy of Fantomas—that accompanied the restricted distribution of a novel that soon passed into oblivion, even among the Russian emigrant community.

As a painter, Annenkov was of only minor interest. Artistically speaking, that is; not as regards the iconography of the Bolshevik leadership. But he was a highly original writer—so original, indeed, that the French reader cannot but admire the translation which, one senses, must have been a difficult feat. In contrast to the style of the 19th-century Russian novel, which sweeps along like a river, the pseudonymous

¹ *La révolution derrière la porte*. By YURI ANNENKOV. Translated from the Russian by ANNE GOLDEFY-FAUCARD. Preface by MICHEL HELLER. Lieu Commun.

Tamiriazhev's style is fragmented into an infinity of tiny trickles. Allusive, syncopated, elliptical, at times even approaching a kind of shorthand, Annenkov's prose contrives to avoid the twin pitfalls of affectation and obscurity, so rich is his visual perception and so concrete his vocabulary. In reading his novel, we actually hear and see the Revolution, very much as if we were hiding behind a half-open door. We observe, guess at, and reconstitute that giant fresco from, as it were, the interstices of history.

ALTHOUGH THIS is an autobiographical novel, with the author portraying himself under another name, Kolenka, it nevertheless achieves what one might call novelistic integrity. One has the curious impression that this is autobiography refined of all narcissism. Instead of being constantly related to the self who is experiencing them, the feelings expressed in the book are detached and left hovering in space like Rabelais' *paroles gelées*. In fact, the central character is not the narrator or his double but the city of St Petersburg, later called Petrograd and then Leningrad. It is the city itself, its lovely buildings, its bright lights, its fogs, its river, its white winters, its nights, its thaws, and all its sounds and smells, that provides the setting—at once casket and tomb—for a motley society pictured in the process of dissolution during the final years of Old Russia and the first years of Soviet Russia. Annenkov's writing is all image and detail, the kind of detail that unlocks the essence of a work of art. The narrator is the opposite of one of his own characters, of whom he says with gentle sarcasm that "like all Russians he was pretty good at weeping over abstractions. . . ."

Annenkov does not even weep over realities, no matter how tragic. When he evokes himself as a child in 1905, lost in a crowd of rioters on which troops open fire in the frosty air, we are given not the event but the chromosomes of the event:

"To his amazement he heard a sharp cracking of nuts. The sound appeared so out of place—clearly no one here was cracking nuts—that Kolenka promptly said to himself they must be throwing paving-stones in the roadway. Yet all around lay the deep January snow. Puzzled as to what was going on, Kolenka turned to ask Senyozha. Senyozha was lying in the snow, his limbs jerking convulsively. . . ."

And that is all we hear of the massacres of 1905. Michel Heller draws attention in his preface to another example of Annenkov's powerful restraint: instead of dwelling on the appalling slaughter of the inhabitants of Petrograd by famine and execution in 1918, he simply cites the poster put up by the "Funerals Department" to announce the distribution of vouchers for the hire of coffins, the said coffins to be returned to the administration (after use) for the benefit of other customers.

This is a tragic novel, but it is also a comic one, animated like Flaubert's *L'Éducation sentimentale* by the whole range of revolutionary tics:

"Two types of dumb show co-existed in the Russian Revolution. The first and Leninist type was the smile. A good-humoured smile, coupled with a wink, that conveyed a certain simple-heartedness and love of one's neighbour, or at least of a class. The second was Trotskyist: a piercing, inquiring glance symbolising inflexible revolutionary determination and vigilance; a Mephistophelian smile. . . ."

But there was also a middle way, a synthesis of the two: Felix Dzerzhinsky, founder of the Secret Police (*Cheka* to *KGB*), "smiled like Lenin but trimmed his beard in the style of Trotsky, creating a new type: the good-natured Mephistopheles. . . ."

Literature, too, remodels its face bit by bit as time goes by; and in the case of Russian literature the plaster mask of conventionalism *à la* Gorky occasionally falls to reveal the rare, chance pearl of its true creators.

Zermatt in Winter

Of all the lonely places of the heart
this must be one of the loneliest
in silence permeating boundless space
where nothing moves unless the heart is moved
except a mist snipping mountains away

Men in the open pause digging a grave
Against the horizon their profiles freeze
Downhill a figure skis out of a wood
Children nearby toss snow into the air
while we trudge past an isolated church

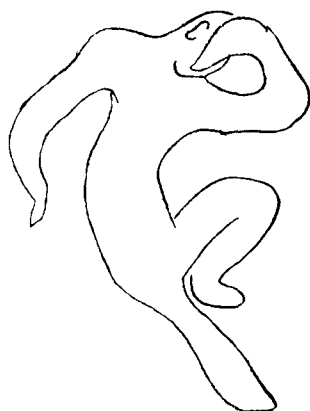
A woman kneeling inside prays in black
Her candle blossoms through the icicles
A cur outside drags fodder up the street
under the constant roaring of the sky
but keeps rockaugen eyes—transfixed—on me

J. F. Hendry

BOOKS & WRITERS

Writing in Images

The Eisenstein Enigma—By MARK LE FANU



NOW THAT THE totalitarian dream is over and done with, and a majority of people agree in decrying the dangers of socialist hubris, it is sometimes hard for us to imagine what it must actually have been like to have attempted to practise a career during the period of Communist supremacy.

I am not talking here about the great (or even the humble) dissidents who, either because of their religious faith or else through some innate good taste and integrity had managed to spot, from a pretty early stage, the essentially bogus and corrupting nature of Bolshevism. For them, after all, there was little choice. They exiled themselves to the margins of society in ways that have subsequently been honoured. What about the others, however—the persons of talent and (sometimes) of good will who threw in their lot with the nascent Soviet régime and attempted to make public careers? By what criteria do we judge these people, if we dare to?

Traditionally, one of the key ways of making discriminations revolves round the question of repentance. “Did they see that they were wrong?” is another way of asking when—if ever—they began to see the light. To the extent that Mayakovsky, for example, went grimly to suicide without repudiating his attitudinising power-worship, we are inclined to judge him harshly and refuse his last hours the honour of tragedy. Shostakovich illuminates the opposite case. For no matter how many times he is known to have abased himself before his leader and signed his name to grotesque passages

of self-criticism, there is still, in the end, the evidence of the *Testimony* to tell us—with irony, scorn and superb literary accomplishment—his true thoughts on Stalin and Stalinism.¹

Sergei Eisenstein was a powerfully energetic writer: it was almost a second profession. In his frequently enforced absence from the camera (especially during the 1930s), he was able to plan and make a start on numerous theoretical enterprises. A projected complete twelve-volume Russian edition of his works, begun by his widow, Pera Attasheva, and continued under the editorship of Naum Kleiman (curator of the Eisenstein Museum in Moscow), has so far reached volume six (publication began in 1964). As it comes out, it is slowly being translated into the major Western languages. The British Film Institute in association with Routledge is in the middle of publishing a fairly extensive three-volume collection, following a chronological plan. The early 1980s saw the separate publication in the West of Eisenstein’s memoirs, written in the last months of his life (they are shortly to be reissued, in expanded form). An important recent addition to the *oeuvre* in translation has been Herbert Marshall’s version of the late bulky theoretical treatise *Nonindifferent Nature* (Cambridge University Press, 1987). If we add the already well known series of essays edited by Jay Leyda under the titles *The Film Sense* (1943) and *Film Form* (1951), plus a number of one-off booklets that have appeared over the years under the Seagull Press imprint from Calcutta, and which have recently been published in paperback by Methuen,² it will be seen that Eisenstein’s writings have begun to become fairly available: enough of them existing in translation, perhaps, to come to provisional conclusions about where this major artist stood on the deep and terrible issues of his day.

And yet, from his writings alone, it would be difficult. Nowhere in the work published so far does one find that satirical and definitive judgment of the system which so animates the pages of Shostakovich’s memoirs, and lends them their Gogolian frisson. On the contrary: right until the end of Eisenstein’s career, and in the midst of sometimes remarkable speculations, one comes across wooden passages extolling socialism and the brotherhood of man, praising Marx, and upholding the dialectic. Did Eisenstein believe these pieties? Or were they written for others’ eyes?

Taken as a whole, Eisenstein’s writings can be tedious. He was a prolix explainer. He wrote far too much, far too fast. But he was also at other times—this is the difficulty—a bril-

¹ I am aware that there has been controversy about the “real” authorship of Shostakovich’s memoirs (Hamish Hamilton, 1979). Do they belong to Shostakovich or to Volkov? For me, an unmistakable voice of genius speaks from them. The more you move into the book, the more the controversy seems unnecessary.

² *On the Composition of the Short Fiction Scenario. A Premature Celebration of Eisenstein’s Centenary. Eisenstein on Disney. The Psychology of Composition.* By S. M. Eisenstein. Edited by JAY LEYDA. Translated and edited by ALAN UPCHURCH. Methuen, £4.95, £4.95, £6.95, and £8.95 respectively.

liant essayist. Numerous chapters in the memoirs seize the reader by what can only be called their literary particularity—their sharpness of observation, their wit, their accuracy of recall. It is clear, too, that Eisenstein was a wonderful letter-writer. In the thick of his published theoretical musings (and surrounded by much wearisome abstraction) there are passages of bravura clarity in which he shows himself to be, among other things, a great original art critic. And there are passages too, from these same works—if rather less frequent—where one does eventually unearth the authentic tragic note, as bitter and disillusioned as Shostakovich: as when, for example, in *Nonindifferent Nature* one suddenly comes across him meditating on the fate of the 200 or so children who passed in front of his camera during auditions for the film *Bezhin Meadow*.³

ALL THIS GIVES RISE to speculation. The Western reader wonders whether there aren't as-yet-unpublished texts where a resistance to Communism would suddenly—and momentarily—become explicit. Somehow, we want him to have said it: in a letter, or a journal entry, or a dark private musing for posterity. Of course there are numerous places in letters to supporters abroad like Jay Leyda and Ivor Montagu where Eisenstein complains, openly enough, about setbacks and disappointments. But these are never connected to an analysis of the system itself—to a specific recognition that the enthusiasm for changing the world which carried him away during the 1920s (along with so many of his generation) might finally have been tragically mistaken.

The lack of such explicit verbal evidence becomes poignant and worth pausing over just because it is clear, in the overall picture, that Eisenstein was a free spirit—perhaps one of the freest of the century. Circumstantial anecdotes about the man, taken in combination with his films and his graphic art, make it impossible, for me, to doubt this. The exhibition mounted in 1988 at the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford, and transferred in late September to the Hayward Gallery (it is currently at the Cornerhouse in Manchester), only confirmed the matter further. In the absence of the decisive verbal clue one turns, necessarily, to Eisenstein's visual world—primarily to the series of drawings, set designs, and "story-boards" which he produced prolifically throughout his career. These furnished a supplement of incredible richness to the main photographic materials of the exhibition, frequently indeed usurping these materials in mystery and intimacy—so

much so that in the end it becomes possible to think of Eisenstein as not only one of the greatest film-makers of our century, but maybe even as one of its greatest hidden painters.⁴

THESE ARE large claims. I know, and must be defended with sobriety or boldness. The earliest drawings by Eisenstein—made when he was scarcely out of childhood—show a precocious genius for caricature. The comic animals and lanky birds into which he transformed the grown-up bourgeoisie of his acquaintance are derivative from 19th-century models: Philipon, Bouquet, Grandville. But, in the youthful Eisenstein's appropriation, the observation comes across as fresh and impelling. The tiny, vigorous line drawings (rather like so many superior comic strips) bustle with delightfully engrossing detail. One catches a glimpse in them of every great artist's profligacy—the sense in which, in truly precocious talent, "knowledge" is independent of experience, outstripping it or pre-dating its acquisition.

In the early 1920s when, in the wake of the Revolution, Eisenstein had moved into theatre, the caricatures give way to stage designs and costume sketches, and these too are extraordinary in their way. Of course at that time there are everywhere in the graphic arts numerous pastiches of Cubism and Vorticism. But with Eisenstein the icons of the avant-garde are elaborated with freedom and mastery. Complexity of form never, I think, veers over into formalism or academic pomposity. They are all in the end witty and legible. (The stage designs had to be concretely implemented; and Eisenstein, a trained engineer, was concerned that his most fantastic spatial arabesques could be translated into three-dimensional fact.)

A gap in his drawings of several years in the 1920s comes to an end with the tragic trip to Mexico—the turning-point in his career and his first taste of failure. Confronted with the mixture of Aztec and Christian art, he again took up his pencil to produce a series of drawings featuring, in the main, imaginary scenes of ecstasy and ritual execution. Blasphemous on one level, at another they show immediate authenticity: the primitive has been responded to, rather than merely (as so often in modern art) dallied with. Eisenstein was a categori-

³ See p. 345 in the Cambridge University Press edition—a peculiarly disturbing couple of paragraphs in their suggestion that evil and corruption are part and parcel of a child's experience in the 1930s. On the topic of "art history", Eisenstein's exegeses of the spatial dynamics of El Greco and Piranesi in the same volume constitute a masterly meditation on the relationship of cinema to painting. There are other instances scattered over the rest of his writings.

⁴ It is a pity that the organisers of the Oxford exhibition opted for a series of essays in the catalogue rather than an item-by-item commentary and illustration. Many of the exhibition's drawings have never before been shown in the West, and it would have been useful to have had a permanent record of them.

**From a developing to a newly industrialised country:
The Republic of Korea, 1961-82** by T. Michell

Korea has had one of the most successful experiences in economic development over the last 30 years. This book looks at the causes of the phenomenal industrial and export growth, and the consequences for employment, labour conditions and income distribution. The relationship between Government and business was crucial for success.

ISBN 92-2-106396-8

£13.20

Year Book of Labour Statistics, 1988—48th issue

Contains essential information for following the evolution of labour, and of living and working conditions throughout the world.

ISBN 92-2-006424-3

£61.60

Access and Visa cards accepted

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

Vincent House, Vincent Square

London SW1P 2NB Tel: 01-828 6401



cal atheist: his films of the 1920s contain numerous anti-clerical references. In Mexico, however, far away from Orthodox Christianity, it is as if for the first time he confronts the claims of religion on religion's own terms, not on the terms laid down by dialectical materialism. Cruel and impressive, these drawings are profound, I am tempted to say, to the extent that satire is reined in—present only on a secondary level of effect.

After his return to Russia, and in the wake of the disaster that *Que Viva Mexico* turned into,⁵ Eisenstein's sketches become more and more private: messages to himself, as it were, recording the ever-increasing darkness of the 1930s. Surely, as we look at the series in a corner of the Oxford Museum dating from the period 1936-39—strange contorted figures engaged in various forms of buggery and self-mutilation (beheadings, suicides by dagger, poison and noose)—we get as clear a message as is necessary of Eisenstein's authentic contemporary politics. In contrast to his parallel writings on montage (writings in which, it could be argued, formal problems in film art provide an escape from the oppressive moral atmosphere), what immediately strikes one about these pictures is their unambiguous directness. The sketches, including their captions—"Despair", "Praecox Dementia", and "Ich trinke das Nichts"—share with Daumier and Goya the terrible ironic brevity of great art; both cryptic and minutely intelligible.

Not all Eisenstein's late drawings are nightmarish. Some, by a miracle, are touched by serenity. How did this come to be? Simplicity in the 20th century has, perhaps, a habit of being acclaimed rather too easily. We look at the work of a number of contemporary graphic artists, and we think: "Well, maybe this peacefulness *has* been wrenched out of torment and complexity—but maybe it hasn't. . . ." A series of line drawings made right at the end of Eisenstein's career, aristocratically entitled *Les Dons* (*The Gifts*), concludes his graphic *oeuvre* on a note of Matissian sublimity: such as we

perhaps have no right to hope for, but which (when and where it exists) cements our conviction of the link between an artist's fortune and his greatness. These are nothing but simple sketches, seven in total: nude stylised figures cavorting through the air, arms stretched out in search of ungraspable treasures—a butterfly, an oyster, an apple, a jet of water, a squirrel, a clump of grass, and finally (reminiscent of Oscar Wilde) the smoke of a cigarette, signifying civility and bohemianism. Here is that rare thing: art at the limits of abstraction, which is at the same time totally charged with meaning—nothing but distilled experience screwed up to the highest pitch of poignancy, of felt life and generosity.

Two months after their completion Eisenstein died, aged fifty, as foretold years previously by a palm-reader in New York. A story-teller would have been hard put to invent a more symbolically appropriate exit-line.

AS I STOOD in front of these last drawings in the Oxford Museum, listening to Naum Kleiman comment on them with his incomparable knowledge and enthusiasm, it was easy to be moved. Everything about the exhibition had moved me so far, especially some photographs taken in Eisenstein's childhood showing him in curls and Fauntleroy knickerbockers. Can one invariably tell a man's—or a child's—character from his face? (Stalin, in certain portraits, looked "smiling" and "genial".) Obviously, Eisenstein had a bonny face, but deeds and charity are surely what count in the end. If (as I happen to) one trusts in Eisenstein's essential goodness, it is still important to keep hold of philosophic calmness and not become carried away.

Take the question of Eisenstein's credulity and superstition—the reverse side, so to speak, of his extraordinary sceptical intelligence. He believed he would die at fifty. To be born under a star (even an unlucky one) is to be singled out from the herd. In Eisenstein's case it allowed him to link his destiny historically—and perhaps socially—to previous Russian heroes who had died before their time, most notably Pushkin and Lermontov.⁶ Equally to the point, one can see his conviction of an early death as having the strongest possible bearing on his decision to go ahead with one final epic project in which he would, at last, have done with prevarication and, in his own words, "go the whole hog".

The astonishing frankness of *Ivan the Terrible* (1944-46) as an analysis of tyranny may have been dependent on Eisenstein's intuition that soon he, at any event, would be beyond retribution. There are many things to say about the making of this amazing film, one of the strangest of all being the extent to which it appears to have been produced under Stalin's auspices. The devastating contemporary parallels between Ivan's *Oprichniki* and the black-leathered hoodlums of the NKVD are adumbrated under the nose of—perhaps even with the collusion of—Soviet Russia's dictator. Eisenstein called the film his "suicide note", but one doesn't get the full mad flavour of the thing until one realises Stalin's perverse ability to interpret as "noble" events and gestures shown in the film which to any normal person are evidence only of criminal debauchery.

⁵ The complex story surrounding this painful episode of Eisenstein's career is described in a number of sources, notably *With Eisenstein in Hollywood* by Ivor Montagu (Seven Seas Books, 1968), *The Making and Unmaking of "Que Viva Mexico"* by H. M. Geduld and Ronald Gottesman (Thames and Hudson, 1970) and *Eisenstein* by Yon Barna (Secker & Warburg, 1973). Briefly: Upton Sinclair (patron and producer of the enterprise) withdrew his financial support when the film was all but complete, confiscating the existing reels. Thus Eisenstein returned to Russia empty-handed. The film has however subsequently been reconstituted on a number of occasions, and by a number of different hands, culminating in Jay Leyda's monumental 260-minute *Study for a Mexican Film* (1953). A recent showing at London's National Film Theatre (17 October 1988) confirmed one's sense of the original work's titanic visual mastery.

⁶ One of Eisenstein's last uncompleted projects was a film about Pushkin provisionally entitled *The Love of a Poet*. Jay Leyda's excellent compilation *Eisenstein at Work* (Methuen, 1982) includes the extant story-boards for this film.

This book, incidentally, brings out the way in which Eisenstein's working drawings all tended to be given multilingual annotation, with captions in French, German and English as well as Russian. Eisenstein's knowledge of the Western European languages, acquired in his youth, was absolutely fluent and expressive. It is surely possible to see his linguistic talent as a bulwark against ideology—a private area of irony and erudition.

ALTHOUGH the film was never finished, that was not, paradoxically, because Stalin disapproved of it—or only partly so. It was Eisenstein's declining health (he had had a heart attack in February 1946) that effectively put an end to the project. Yet I wonder whether in the climate of the time *Ivan the Terrible* could really ever have been successfully completed. To see Parts One and Two again (some of Part Three was shot, but has disappeared) is to be reminded of the film's sublime formal majesty—its beauty. The praises that are heaped upon it by film histories really do stand up. Rhythm, composition and acting are impeccable. Eisenstein's hundreds of sources, literary and pictorial, are integrated into a profound, idiosyncratic, and personal vision of the world. (As the Hayward showed, the entire visual iconography, down to the paintings on the walls of the monasteries and cathedrals, was designed by Eisenstein himself.)

The greatness of the film seems to me to lie in the way in which the parallels with the contemporary world—pointed and unmistakable—are subordinated to the integrity of an original story. Ivan both is, and isn't, Stalin; and in the margin of that difference the author of the film makes appropriate discriminations. For the main fact about *Ivan the Terrible* is that God throughout the film exists as a living reality, even as His commandments are flouted. Thus there is a law above the self-made law of man, which can judge men's

⁷ An excellent modern account of Eisenstein's dilemmas during this period can be found in Herbert Marshall's *Masters of the Soviet Cinema: Crippled Creative Biographies* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), pp. 187-232.

actions, and place them in a traditional moral framework. A crucial scene filmed for Part Three (probably lost for ever, except in still photographs) has Ivan on his knees breaking his staff against a huge, severe wall painting of Khristos Pantokrator. A theme of Repentance, Guilt and Remorse runs through the film, elevating Ivan's destiny into the realms of the tragic, and separating him—in dignity and self-knowledge—from the horrible 20th-century tyrant, for whom the use of the word "God" was merely a grammatical convenience, when it was not a malicious provocation.⁷

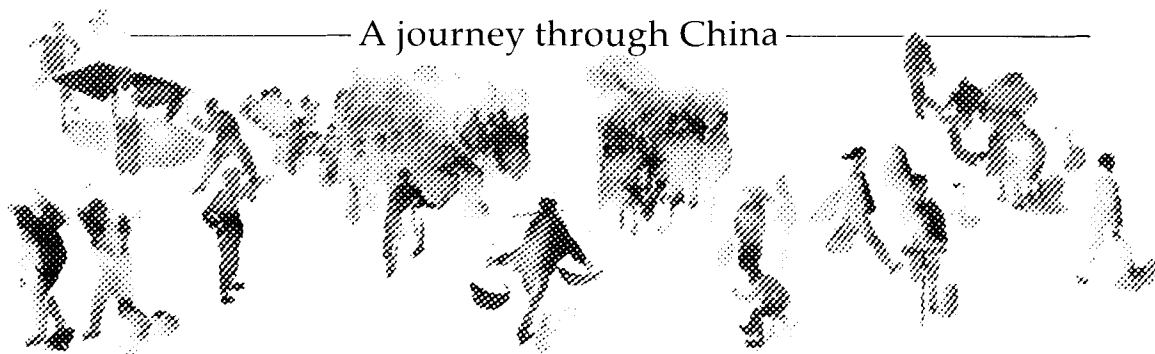
Eisenstein's refusal, in *Ivan the Terrible*, to be superior to Christianity is, for me, a large part of the film's authority, marking an advance on his previous works which, no matter how brilliant technically, are all somehow tainted by their allegiance to a lying system of values. It could be said that *Strike* (1925), *Battleship Potemkin* (1926), *October* (1928), and *The General Line* (1929) are ingenious works of propaganda, shot through with elements of kitsch—eloquent, at any event, of the vices that follow from a rancorous satirical egalitarianism. None the less, the worst of Eisenstein's films is as good as the best of almost anyone else's. Each of the films of the 1920s contains passages that belong profoundly to art, as well as to public and political ends. Each contains sequences of private sincerity that evade by so many miles the comfortable critic's retrospective urge to judgment. Eisenstein in his character seems so witty and cheerful, so alive to the sculpture and dignity of the human form, so fundamentally dialectical, that, try as one will it is impossible to substantiate charges of dogmatism.

COLIN THUBRON

—His award-winning No.1 bestseller—

BEHIND THE WALL

—A journey through China—



'An achievement of great and lasting brilliance' – Patrick Leigh Fermor

Out now in Penguin



£4.99

IN THIS CONTEXT (the heart, as I see it, of "the Eisenstein puzzle"), I am fascinated by two of his films that have perhaps been talked about less than others. One of them, *Bezhin Meadow* (shot and almost completed in 1936-37), we shall probably never know about fully, for it seems that the last surviving print was destroyed by the authorities during the War. On the surface, this film is unexceptionally Communist. The story tells of a young pioneer during the period of collectivisation. Convinced that his *kulak* father is up to no good, he reports him to the local village Soviet and is murdered by the man in revenge. Plainly, the official moral is on the side of the youngster and of tale-telling; but in the controversy surrounding the film one is free to detect a private hidden sympathy directing us to the point of view of the poor, beleaguered parent. Religion enters the film in the guise of a curious meditation on Abraham's proposed sacrifice of Isaac.

A reconstituted version of the movie, made up from Jay Leyda's still photographs (Leyda was the official set photographer), has been circulating among film clubs since 1967, enabling us to imagine the film as it might have been in its glory. The essential difficulty of judging Eisenstein, both as man and as artist, seems to me more manifest here than in any of his other works. On the one hand we have the historical facts: Stalin's grotesque experiment in agriculture undertaken in the Ukraine from 1929 to 1934, involving the mass deportations and the death of millions by execution and famine. On the other hand, here is a major film-maker glorifying the social mechanisms responsible for precisely this catastrophe.

Could Eisenstein, by 1936, not have known, not have suspected? What was going through his mind and his heart while he made the film? As we view the work through the help of Leyda's photographs, the compositions, again and again, seem monumental and beautiful—almost as if there were embedded in the film a private, subversive poetry holding out against the official view, introducing an element of *toska* (pity and longing) into the portrayal of the father and the other *kulaks*, where the script demands scorn and condemnation.

Regrettably, this must remain speculation. Deprived of a chance of seeing the completed film with its rhythms, pauses, and ellipses, any verdict must be hesitant. Still, the "ambiguity" certainly seems to have been sensed by Eisenstein's contemporaries, including his arch-enemy Boris Shumyatsky (then head of Mosfilm), who launched a furious attack on the director through an article in *Pravda*, which effectively sealed the film's fate. (Eisenstein's subsequent repudiation of his "errors" in *Bezhin Meadow*—a grim document of self-abasement—is printed in full in Marie Seton's excellent biography.⁸)

Curiously enough, *Alexander Nevsky*—the film that followed *Bezhin Meadow*—also seems to me a rather neglected work. This was Eisenstein's epic account of the defeat of the

13th-century invading Teutonic Knights by the Prince of Novgorod. Making it—a large, popular, broad canvas—probably saved Eisenstein's life, since Stalin approved of the project and backed it strongly. It had originally been conceived, in the mid-1930s, as part of the campaign against Fascism. Filmed in 1938, it was hastily withdrawn from circulation on the signing of the Hitler-Stalin pact—only to be brought out and dusted down in the wake of 1941. Perhaps it is misleading to call the film neglected, for, with its celebrated operatic score by Prokofiev, and its great set piece of the battle on the ice, *Alexander Nevsky* has had its fair share of influence, up to and including its influence on Sir Laurence Olivier, who had plainly seen it before embarking on *Henry V* (1944).

What, in particular, is impressive about this film (as with Olivier's) is the noble candour of its patriotism. In the figure of Nevsky (first seen like Christ with fishing companions on the shore of an inland lake) there is a pure lyrical ingenuousness that lifts the meditation to the level of proverb and legend. Eisenstein's films of the 1920s had cut themselves off from the pre-Revolutionary past deliberately; *Alexander Nevsky*, on the contrary, embraced it. That is a bonus, whatever else one might think, and it helps to account for the film's rapturous lyricism. Seldom before—except in certain shots of Dovchenko's—have clouds been so wonderfully looked at, so expressively sketched in against the empyrean, as they are in the open-air scenes that precede *Alexander Nevsky*'s great culminating battle. This limpidity extends to the spoken (or rather, "orated") dialogue, of a loftiness at the furthest possible remove from vulgar "class vengeance"—particularly, I feel, in the grave language of Nevsky as he passes judgment on the captured German nobles.

Here, then, is a film made under Communism, in Communism's most militant period, that somehow succeeds in ignoring that ideology's existence. It would be anachronistic to speak of Eisenstein "getting away with it" (plainly, historical nationalism of the sort dramatised in the film is also an ideology); but for me the work has a mysterious fervour that eludes the grasp of traditional commentators.⁹

AS FILM-MAKERS GO, especially Soviet film-makers, a fair amount is known about Sergei Eisenstein. He was much in the public eye, not only domestically but, through his wide and hospitable correspondence, abroad. In addition to his memoirs there are several detailed biographies in English, one of them—Marie Seton's—is of particular "close-up" value, since it grew out of an extended personal relationship. None the less, it is still possible to ask whether we really know Eisenstein. There are periods of his life that don't seem to have been much explored. One would give a good deal, for instance, to have more information about the period 1917-19, during which he first gave his allegiance to Marxism. Eisenstein of course, came from a high-bourgeois background in the provinces.¹⁰ Why, therefore, the *choice* for rebellion? The traditional explanation (including his own) is a Freudian one: revolt against the father. But how many of his schoolmates in the class of cadets (captured in a photo in the Hayward exhibition, disporting themselves dandyishly

⁸ Marie Seton, *Sergei M. Eisenstein: A Biography* (Dennis Dobson, 1952, rev. ed. 1978).

⁹ The pioneer British Eisenstein critic Peter Wollen, writing from a left-wing view point, hates it. See his *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema* (Secker & Warburg, 1969), p. 46: "an artistic disaster". But the essay on Eisenstein is intelligently conceived.

¹⁰ The Baltic port of Riga was rather cosmopolitan; "provincial" only to the extent that it was not St Petersburg.

with pencil-thin moustaches) threw in their lot with the Revolution—and how vociferously? To what extent was Eisenstein typical?

And so I return to the central cultural/political question: Was the falling-out with Stalinism, which undoubtedly occurred, also and simultaneously a falling-out with Socialism? I suspect we shall never know the truth infallibly. Certainly, Eisenstein did not publicly dissociate himself from his rulers either by silence or scorn, in the way of such diversely great figures as Bulgakov, Mandelstam, and Akhmatova. And for this he has had to take his due share of criticism. It may be significant that all the references to Eisenstein in Solzhenitsyn's works are hostile; while Shostakovich never forgave Eisenstein for staging Wagner in 1940 at the request of the German authorities.

Niceness of judgment is difficult from this distance, and

across cultures. One could ask, among other awkward questions, whether Eisenstein's associates were always as pleasant as they should have been. The co-scenarist on *Alexander Nevsky* (as, later, on the aborted *Ferghana Canal*) happened to be a disgusting character named Pyotr Pavlenko, about whom Nadezhda Mandelstam (a good judge in such matters) notes that he was one of the most chilling men she ever came across, even in that period especially rich in scoundrels. Was he foisted upon Eisenstein, or chosen? Such questions are not always illuminated by the biographies.

The impression strongly remains, however, that on fundamental human matters Eisenstein had delicacy. Even without knowing "everything", I am convinced of his generosity of spirit. In fact, I would go further and suggest (on the evidence of the Exhibition) that he was not only one of the greatest, but one of the most lovable, artists of our century.

Critic of France

On Paul Nizan—By WALTER REDFERN



WHEN THEY WERE schoolboys together (so close that they were often mistaken for each other), Nizan and Sartre dreamed of becoming Supermen. Sartre became a superstar. Killed by a stray German bullet in 1940, Nizan hibernated for twenty years, irremediably tarnished in Communist eyes because he had resigned from the Party at the time of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in 1939. Sartre resurrected him

with some moving and breast-beating voodoo in 1960; the *gauchistes* of 1968 rediscovered him as a long-lost uncle; and since 1980, in France and England, four books have been devoted to him, on top of the half-dozen published in the late 1960s and '70s.

Raymond Aron, a contemporary of Nizan and Sartre at the *École Normale Supérieure* and a witness at Nizan's wedding, wrote in *The Opium of the Intellectuals* (1955):

"The talent of French intellectuals lies in ignoring or often aggravating the problems peculiar to their own country, out of an arrogant urge to be a conscience for the whole of mankind."

That is, universalist umbilicism.

In his capacity as a journalist of both home and foreign affairs in the '30s, Nizan reflected and observed. concluding that the only lessons France had to teach the world were cautionary tales. His first novel, *Antoine Bloyé* (first published

in 1933), was one such warning. Its agonist—for he is too passive to be called a protagonist—rises gradually from the working class through the command-structure of the French railway-system to a post in middle management, without ever truly exercising his own will or decision. In old age he sees impotently how he has wasted his life: a middle-class success but a failure on all crucial criteria, and a betrayer of his class of origin. He has collaborated with the system, and ends in profound alienation.

Antoine Bloyé has the same sort of relation to Communism as Sartre's play *Huis clos* to heroic existentialism—what it puts on display is the stalled state of the living dead. Any different option (solidarity with other workers, active control of one's own life, full exploitation of one's being) is present only by implication. The question posed is: since this life is a wasteland, what might be a better life? *Antoine Bloyé* is a pre-Communist novel, though its analyses of the capitalist régime in which Antoine is trapped are reinforced by young Marxian concepts like the alienation of labour.

In an intelligent and sympathetic study of Nizan,¹ Michael Scriven analyses persuasively how in *Antoine Bloyé* the hackneyed but potent images of ceaseless time ("the spectacle of mortal man speeding to his death") hypnotise readers, diverting them from the parallel historical events. After the scandal of a technological error in production which wrecks his upwardly plodding career, Bloyé is effectively lifted out of history—that is: change, development, hope—in the last years of his life. But Scriven, determined to emphasise the social and the ideological over the private and the psychological, does not pay enough attention to Bloyé's personal responsibility for his abortive existence, which Nizan himself recognises. Nizan condemns both the "saccharine slavery" of a safe bourgeois marriage and the network of determinisms engineered by the boss-class for its unprotesting servants.

¹ *Paul Nizan, Communist Novelist*. By MICHAEL SCRIVEN. Macmillan. £29.50.

Scriven claims that, swinging between the models of Lenin and Dostoevsky, Nizan charts in his novels "the textual intercourse between these two discourses", and that he therefore "speaks with a forked tongue". He quotes Nizan on the need for writers to move beyond and deeper than socialist realism into "exacting complicity".

I FIND THIS GOAL achieved in *The Conspiracy*, for which Quintin Hoare provides a faithful translation, useful notes, and a version of Sartre's 1938 review of this novel.² Here Nizan, comparably with Stendhal, alternates between indicting the wasteful foolishness of his group of students from the *École Normale Supérieure*, and analysing from the inside the motives for their mistaken endeavours; verdict and connivance tellingly conjoined.

Nizan writes confidently. By 1938 he had fully transplanted himself from the hothouse world of the *grande école* into the harsher and more earthy universe of Communist militancy. When, however, the narrative voice in *The Conspiracy* makes prophecies about the future fates of these youths, it does not sound like the deterministic view of the convert toeing the Party line, but rather the adult irony of a survivor who has learnt to channel his energies into less self-entranced options. Also ironic is the fact that the most committed of the five young men, Pluvinaige, is a morbid misfit who, although the only one of them to join the Party, then betrays it and sinks into the work of informant for the secret police. It was this pitiable betrayer, whose confession allows readers to understand the perverted workings of his psyche, who, when Nizan left the Party a year later, was picked out by its hatchet-men as proof that only a traitor could write so convincingly of a traitor—a logic that would turn Herman Melville into a whale.

Contemporaneously with Sartre's *Nausea*, Nizan was describing the gelatinous, viscous world that proves so resistant to his young heroes' attempts to subvert it. But years before Sartre, Nizan was making dramatic capital out of scenes of judgment (family tribunal, peer-group questioning, Communist-cell interrogation), where the accusing gaze has the petrifying effect of the Medusa on its victim. The last letter from Nizan to Sartre, in 1940, wittily contrasts their Army duties—Nizan in the Pioneer Corps and Sartre dispatching balloons into the empyrean in the meteorological branch. Long before and long after Nizan's death, Sartre envied his friend's concreteness and his commitment. Nizan could never be only a fellow-traveller, however critical—the role Sartre adopted for some years towards the *Parti Communiste Français*.

Entry to the Party does not save Pluvinaige's tormented young soul. Future adherence might, beyond the confines of the text, give a precise direction to another group-member, Laforgue. These young men argue sporadically about the need for definitive commitment, while dabbling in a rather operatic conspiracy (military and industrial espionage on be-

half of the Soviet Union, though in fact the results of their spying never reach Moscow). This plot is the fevered brain-child of Rosenthal, the group leader, who also founds their would-be subversive little magazine, *Civil War*. Rosenthal is concerned above all with profanation of his *haut-bourgeois* origins (his family and others like it are shown as living like colonials, totally divorced from the teeming mass of surrounding natives); and he extends this maleficence to an incestuous liaison with his sister-in-law.

Profanation suggests obsession, a failure to think independently. When the family scandal fails to turn into the high drama of confrontation that he longs for, Rosenthal, in a fit of semi-metaphysical spite, commits suicide. He is, however, no straw man for Nizan's scorn. For all his futility, the narrative voice laments this waste of energy and passion.

An earlier episode—Rosenthal's brief idyll on the island of Naxos, where he is bowled over by the self-contained, self-explanatory Greek landscape which resists mental lucubrations—reveals a Nizan fully capable of lyricism and of stepping way outside the stereotype of the committed writer. Similarly, Nizan's openness to psychology and his readiness to stress the large place of sexuality in human affairs lift him beyond typical toe-ers of Party lines. When he describes the Paris seasons, it is not to satirise capitalist modes, but in the sense of the weather in the streets and its strong effects on everybody.

Of the group, Laforgue alone seems to have hopes of salvation. A near-fatal illness acts as his witch-doctor in the *rite de passage* from unserious youth to the first stages of authentic living. Named after the quintessentially ironic poet Jules Laforgue, he contests his fellow-conspirators and, after his illness, his own (so far stalled) life. The near-miss, we are persuaded to allow, will make him live better, more avidly, more pointedly, in future.

FOR MICHAEL SCRIVEN, given his hostility to literary evaluation and preference for an ideological approach, *Le Cheval de Troie*—the novel published between *Antoine Bloyé* and *The Conspiracy*—is Nizan's most finished fiction. It concerns a group of militants in 1934 in a provincial town, who engage in a struggle against the fascist gangs in the ascendant at the time. Some die in the street-battle; a woman dies messily alone after an abortion made urgent by her precarious situation. If anything, the description of the second agony is more powerful than the bloody political confrontation. As Scriven notes, "... the most visibly politicised of Nizan's novels is at the same time [because of its fixation on death] the most deeply metaphysical".

Scriven stresses that at every turn Nizan gave unstinting support to his Party, following its directives through sectarian and later popular-frontist strategies; in word and deed he was in fact a Stalinist. But Scriven admits that there remained in Nizan a residual anarchism, which in turn fed his literary imagination and capacity for sympathy with a far wider range of human behaviour than Party-mindedness alone would have permitted. In his view, Nizan avoided "the twin pitfalls of ideological predictability and literary irresponsibility".

² *The Conspiracy*. By PAUL NIZAN. Translated by QUINTIN HOARE. Verso, £12.95.

As an intellectual, Nizan's relationship with the Party could never be sweet. His polemical essays, for example, were rapped by Party spokesmen for being too abstract; they attacked the idealist philosophy then reigning in French higher education, and were thus too posh, too remote from the preoccupations of factory-workers. Nizan was also criticised "for not engaging in the problematical task of theorising socialist realist practice"—largely because (as Scriven shows) he swung between the Bukharin and the Zhdanov theses at the 1934 Soviet Writers' Congress: literature as a distorting or as a faithful mirror of social reality.

Nizan's act of deserting the Party has often been interpreted as a proof that he joined and stayed in it only with mental reservations. Scriven produces convincing arguments to suggest that this is to see things back to front: "It is his resignation from the Party which must be interpreted in the light of his allegiance to communism." Nizan was very probably ready to accept short-term cynical expediency on the part of Stalin's Russia and (if they had been capable of such political realism) the PCF leaders, so long as he could feel convinced that a longer-term morality was not being abandoned. The Nazi-Soviet pact and the ensuing invasion of Poland left him in little doubt that it had been.

IT SEEMS IN LINE with Sartre's concept of "*contre-finalité*", or Sod's Law, that Michael Scriven, having "grown out of" literary analysis, should write better, more excitedly, about

Nizan's fiction than about politics—although maybe tired discourse is all that the latter can engender in anyone. Some readers might find his repeated stressing of arguments somewhat naive and over-anxious, but for me the overall impression is one of careful thinking and honesty of purpose.

While I believe it is possible to be serious without being owl-solemn—and Nizan's work embodies this belief, its wit counteracting its tendency to dogmatism—Scriven's study tries hard, and in the main successfully, to espouse and expound Nizan's motives for living and writing as he did. Though he states his intention of denying himself the luxury of value-judgments, inevitably his preferences show through; but they are worked for, earned. He dismantles Nizan's texts, his fiction, and his journalism, lucidly and sensitively (although he underestimates the percussive force of the early polemical essays), and he corrects in the long run any tendency to produce too cut-and-dried a taxonomy.

His book is the best of the recent clutch, because it examines more thoroughly the life and work of Nizan. Scriven's aim is "to explore the possibility of an authentically left-wing political literature". And yet he fair-mindedly concludes that Nizan's Communist novels "are destined in all probability to remain as symbols of the unfulfilled communist potential of a departed epoch".

Nizan was only 35 when he died; nobody can know what he would have produced had he survived the War. Certainly he would have been the first to make clear (for he was not only a precursor of existentialism but also had an undoubted

HARVESTER WHEATSHEAF

NEW TITLES

Change and Stability in Foreign Policy: The Problems and Possibilities of Détente

KJELL GOLDMANN

"The best theoretical analysis of détente that I have read... the competent framework is original, creative and apt to be heuristically useful."

DEBORAH LARSON

"It has a level of rigor that seems to me rare in books of this field."

GREGORY E. TRÉVERTON

248pp Cloth 0 7450 0560 8 £32.50 Available

Labour Markets in Action: Essays in Empirical Economics

RICHARD FREEMAN

Freeman addresses an interesting and important set of issues in an imaginative and thoughtful way. His views, ably demonstrated by the essays will be widely cited by future generations of labour economists. The subject matter and style will ensure that the book has a wide appeal to all economists and policy makers.

368pp Cloth 0 7450 0564 0 £25.00 August 1989

The Role of the Economist in Government: An International Perspective

JOSEPH A. PECHMAN

This illuminating book explores the record and role of economic advisers in government in ten countries and five international organisations. Topics examined include the status of economic experts; the nature of the interactions between political traders and economists; the type of economic arguments that have proven most persuasive; and the general impact and influence of economists in the making of economic policy.

400pp Cloth 0 7450 0341 9 £27.50 May 1989

International Reorganisation and American Economic Policy

LEONARD A. RAPPING

"Rapping has brought sharply into focus the organisational and political elements which underlie our current economic problems—deficits, productivity, and inflation among others. With widely gyrating stock prices and exchange rates, the notion of the price-guided rational allocation of resources clearly has its limits. Rapping provides a richer causal background to analysis and policy."

KENNETH ARROW

224pp Cloth 0 7450 0508 X £19.95 Available

The Market and the State: Government Policy Towards Business in Europe, Japan and the USA

DAVID AUDRETSCH

This fascinating book compares government policies towards business in Europe, Japan and the USA and analyses their impact and effectiveness as well as assessing the policy and the specific circumstances under which government intervention is most successful.

352pp Cloth 0 7450 0326 5 £35.00 June 1989

All Orders to: International Book Distributors, Harvester Wheatsheaf
66 Wood Lane End, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP2 4RG England, U.K.



HARVESTER WHEATSHEAF

SIMON & SCHUSTER INTERNATIONAL GROUP
66 Wood Lane End, Hemel Hempstead,
Hertfordshire, HP2 4RG, England.

element of the protestant ethic in his make-up) that a writer, like any human being, must be judged on his acts, and not on his intentions or his virtualities. But, as a character from *The Conspiracy* says, "... one does not recover from communism, once one has experienced it". This statement can be taken any way, including the cynical, but I doubt whether Nizan would ever have opted for cynicism. That would have been a real betrayal of everything he had stood and written for in his lifetime.

Scriven is surely right to contest the overcharged image of Nizan promulgated by Sartre: a Nizan eternally youthful, dissident, iconoclastic. Merleau-Ponty who—like Nizan, though at a later date—helped to make Sartre more politically conscious, wonders in his book *Signes* (1960) whether the Nizan

that Sartre knew and partially misread ever really existed. In his view, Sartre makes the mistake of assuming that the whole man, formed over a lifetime of political action, writing, marriage and travel, was present at every moment of it. The dynamics of existentialist analysis often have this curiously congealing outcome. Nizan's palpable neuroses were far more socially oriented than Sartre's. Despite the carapace of irony and sophisticated intelligence, Nizan always remained vulnerable. As Merleau-Ponty saw, he absorbed his times through his very pores.

We are of course free to resist, but Nizan seeks to exact our complicity. Sartre saw straight when he characterised Nizan's style as "a style for combat, a weapon". Nizan's designs on his readers were not seductive but aggressive.

The Passion for Wisdom

On Theodor Fontane—By RÜDIGER GÖRNER



"IT MAY BE that you do not like his art", wrote Somerset Maugham about his protagonist, the artist Charles Strickland, "but at all events you can hardly refuse it the tribute of your interest." The same might be said to an English-speaking reader of the German novelist Theodor Fontane, whose greatness was (like that of Charles Strickland) "authentic".

Born in 1819, with a Franco-Prussian background, Theodor grew up in the sandy province of Brandenburg, and throughout his life praised the "quiet beauty" of this landscape. His father, Louis Henri Fontane, for some time the local chemist of Neuruppin and known for his rather relaxed understanding of the duties of life (in other words, he was a *bon vivant*), must have appeared to Theodor a jolly companion rather than an authority. But he grew to be much fonder of his mother, in particular after his parents separated. Neuruppin had its local gossip, after all: the chemist had experimented too much with the love of his wife, and the highly impressionable Theodor experienced for the first time what he was to call later in his life "the delicacy of marriage".

Although he was supposed to follow his father in his profession as pharmacist, Fontane showed much more interest in history and literature than in pills and chemical essences. The abbreviated, ill-written prose of prescriptions could hardly satisfy his poetic mind.

Originally, the young Fontane explored his surroundings with verse; eventually he discovered poetry in landscape. But the discovery he cherished was the investigation of his childhood. In his early writings Fontane amalgamated the cradle

of his existence with his vision of history: only the past provided, according to him, justice and reconciliation. While other young people made plans for their future, Fontane looked back—not in anger but in sheer admiration—to the values and traditions of the past. Freudians would be unable to detect anything "sensational" in Fontane's early reminiscences, except that a young writer was to *begin* his career with memories. Fontane seemed almost reluctant to enter the next stage of life; at the same time he must have felt he was important enough for his childhood to be worth handing down to posterity.

Fontane always stressed that he had spent his childhood and early youth in an atmosphere of harmony and peace; he tended to forget domestic friction, chiefly between his parents. The turmoil caused by the Napoleonic Wars was long over; Prussia was recuperating and restoring the "old order" that had dominated life before Napoleon's invasion. In the country, even in the closest proximity to Berlin, the era of Restoration (1815-46) meant a life of almost complete drowsiness; Fontane called it a time of "forced contemplation".

In this contemplative mood, he married Emilie Rouanet-Kummer. The second part of her surname, meaning "sorrow", was a bad omen for their often troubled marriage, while her first name was that of his mother. However, there is no reason to imagine Fontane a dull bourgeois simply because he led the life of a learned chemist, though a chemist with poetic ambitions and a sharp wit. He was not a born provincial, either in looks or in outlook. He was restless; and saw England as a haven for continentals who wanted a taste of what the world was really like. In May 1844 he travelled there; it was to be the first of three crucial stays in the country of "mysterious clarity".

This first visit took place just one year before the engagement which caused him as much emotional difficulty as the

separation of his parents. But, yet again, Fontane preferred not to know too much about such problems: he constantly emphasised that his parents had not been legally divorced. He worked relentlessly to rescue what he called "the gentle harmony of being" and tried—in vain—to exemplify it.

THERE IS NO GERMAN WRITER of Fontane's eminence whose style and attitude, whose culture and frame of mind, have been so deeply influenced by England. For the same reason, there is hardly any German author who should be more accessible to an English-speaking reader. Yet there is little awareness of Fontane among such readers, and hardly any writer in English has been significantly influenced by him. To begin with, the flagrant lack of good translations prevented wider reception of his works. But even after 1967, when Douglas Parmée published his splendid translation of *Effi Briest*, Fontane's most famous novel, in the Penguin Classics series, nothing much changed.¹

Why? It seems that a "gentle Prussian" simply was not compatible with current misconceptions. A re-examination of Prussia, and Prussian values, is overdue—particularly in relation to the present debate on Victorian or Edwardian values.

Fontane's *English Diaries* are full of observations and comments on mid-Victorian London, although they may appear less sound than his later remarks. London he called the "model or, better, the essence of the whole world"; he spoke of its "magic—its unique mass civilisation". But most important to him, as he wrote in his summary *A Summer in London*, were London's bridges. Their symbolic value seemed obvious to him: they expressed the beginning of an age of communication between people, nations, and cultures. He also noticed what was missing in British civilisation of the early Victorian era. "I believe", he wrote:

"that the English people possess everything that is necessary to create such impressive buildings [as these bridges], namely: intellect, wealth, perseverance, boldness—but they lack what is essential to create anything artistically perfect: taste and a real sense of beauty."

BACK IN BERLIN, Fontane wondered what he should call himself. A chemist—of words? A journalist? A professional traveller? In 1848 he tried to be a rebel, and he fought on the barricades in Berlin. But his strong Prussian genes checked his revolutionary French blood. Unlike Richard Wagner in Dresden, Fontane subdued his revolutionary mood and behaved like a good German rebel: he made his peace with the authorities in order to become a well-reputed journalist. True, he sometimes had difficulty getting his articles published (mostly in conservative and liberal papers), since they tended to be subjective. It was as if he wanted to train himself in the versatility of writing, preparing

¹ Theodor Fontane, *Effi Briest* (tr. Douglas Parmée, Penguin Classics, 1967, 1985).

LIBERAL SOCIAL THOUGHT

CRITICAL REVIEW

A JOURNAL OF BOOKS AND IDEAS
VOLUME 2 NUMBER 4 \$5.95

MARXISM VS. LIBERALISM

MARX: PLANNING FOR FREEDOM
Andrzej Walicki on the tyranny of the market

MARX & THE ENLIGHTENMENT
Kai Nielsen on the moral Marx

HAYEK VS. MARX
Chris Sciabarra: Marx's epistemic Utopia

MARX AS PROPHET AND

Sample issue: £1

CRITICAL REVIEW, Dept. 6A
Kirkton House, Kirkton Manor,
Tweeddale, EH45 9JH Scotland

THE DAVID WATT MEMORIAL PRIZE

Following his tragic and untimely death in March 1987, The David Watt Memorial Prize was introduced in 1988 to commemorate his life and work.

Organised, funded and administered by RTZ, the Memorial Prize is a tribute to a man widely regarded as one of the UK's outstanding writers, thinkers and political commentators.

Those eligible for the annual prize of £2,000 are writers actively engaged in writing for newspapers and journals, in the English language, on international and political matters. Their writings, in the opinion of an adjudicating panel, will have made outstanding contributions towards the clarification of international and political issues and the promotion of greater understanding of such issues.

The closing date for entries and nominations is 20th March 1989. Full details and Entry Forms are available from The Administrator, The David Watt Memorial Prize, RTZ Limited, 6 St James's Square, London SW1Y 4LD.

himself for something that had not yet taken shape. This may explain why he became a novelist so late in his life (he was nearly sixty when his first novel, *Before the Storm*, appeared—undoubtedly the greatest historical novel in German literature, surpassed only by Tolstoy's achievements in this genre, as R. J. Hollingdale has remarked in the preface to his outstanding recent translation of the work²).

Apart from his sometimes critical financial situation, which did not allow Fontane to lead the life of a free writer until the mid-1870s, it was his tremendous respect for the works of the great masters that made him wonder whether he could compete with them. He admired Shakespeare and Dickens, Cervantes and Schiller; and he knew that he would have to train himself before he could even dream of composing a novel of comparable value and relevance. He regarded his long years as a journalist as an apprenticeship. At least in principle, he would not have objected to Bernard Shaw's statement that even in the highest literature one can find elements of journalism.

In April 1852 Fontane eloped to England—with solitude. He needed some liberation from the bonds and strains of his marriage; but he also needed a challenging contrast to the atmosphere in Berlin, increasingly conservative after the failed revolution of 1848. He spent more than six months in London as official correspondent on British affairs for the *Preussische Zeitung*, noting on his arrival:

"Strangely enough I felt as if I had come home; I could hear my heart beat when my cab rolled across the beautiful Waterloo Bridge into the rich life between the City and the West End. For a moment, I managed to forget everything else: wife, child, pressure, sorrow—the old spell of London's greatness came alive again and took hold of me."

However, his second stay in London proved less happy than the first and shorter visit. The clique atmosphere in the clubs, and the heated political debates and intrigues, dispelled his formerly idealistic view of England. He missed the subtlety he had loved so much in London's social life, and noticed that the *nouveaux riches*, the merchants, bankers and colonialists, had begun to worship exclusively material values. No wonder that he came to love Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* and Dickens's social criticism.

Fontane felt so depressed about his situation and his con-

stant struggle for recognition that he dared not even visit his literary idol, Charles Dickens, although he lived for quite some time in the same neighbourhood, in Tavistock Square. Back in Berlin, it took him a good deal of time to realise that he was as worried by his observations of London as he was by his own position. By this he did not even mean his financial situation (which had become desperate again) but the vagueness of his intellectual destination, and his still shapeless artistic ambitions. For a while it looked as if he had found his way when, in 1855, he was sent for a third (and final) time to England. The Prussian government appointed him (as an expert on British affairs) to lead a small Prussian political lobby which was intended to make Prussia's neutrality during the Crimean War more popular—both in the British press and in government circles. We know from Fontane's diary that he managed to write articles for *The Times*, *The Herald*, and *The Morning Chronicle*. But his mission failed to convince the British public that Prussian neutrality was right.

Nevertheless, Fontane felt he might be successful in mediating between England and Prussia in cultural matters. This was one of the reasons why he began to travel through Britain, and particularly in Scotland. He admired the Scots for their true patriotism and strong feeling of identity, and he idolised (like so many German Protestants!) Mary Stuart and the House of Stuart in general. He had also discovered the work of Sir Walter Scott and the importance in it of landscape. Culloden Moore, Linlithgow Castle, and Melrose Abbey were transfigured in Fontane's mind into a "scenario of pure souls". In London, he stayed with his family in St Augustine Road in Camden Town; and there he invited friends who shared his belief in the value of cultural exchanges.

THE AFFINITY between the British landscape and the scenery in Brandenburg, as well as the importance which both countries attached to their history, inspired Fontane to write his first major work after his return to Berlin: the *Wanderungen durch die Mark Brandenburg*. These "wanderings through Brandenburg" follow the historic paths of this unique landscape. In some respects they anticipate Wagner's Gurnemanz in *Parsifal*: time is embodied in space and scenery in Fontane's masterly attempt to form a rural counterpoint to the restless progress of mass civilisation as he had observed it in London and Berlin. The *Wanderungen* were a true blend of journalism, historiography, and lyric prose—humorous, ironic and intrinsically human, in some respects a powerful prelude to the novels still to come. Their major motifs were already recognisable: the fate of the

² Theodor Fontane, *Before the Storm: A Novel of the Winter of 1812-13* (tr. R. J. Hollingdale, Oxford University Press, 1985). There is also a fine translation of Fontane's novel *A Man of Honour* by E. M. Valk (New York, 1975). *Short Novels and Other Writings* (tr. Peter Demetz) was published by Continuum/Sheldon Press in 1984, and *Entanglements* (tr. Derek Bowman) by Three Rivers Books (Mill Green, Bampton, Oxon OX8 2HF). The best recent book on Fontane in English is Henry Garland, *The Berlin Novels of Theodor Fontane* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1980).

RESEARCH CONSULTANTS

Leading academics

RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

Experienced honours graduates

TRANSLATORS

Qualified, most European languages

ARCHIVISTS

Editing and indexing by word processor

Research Assistance Routledge Associates

4 Lauriston Road, London SW19 4TQ

Phone 01-947 9375

Fontane was never tempted to create idyllic pastorals. He had schooled his eye for the social problems of his time—that was the particular heritage of the months he had spent in England. Two years before his death, he said:

These are the words of a writer who is traditionally seen as one of Germany's most "conservative".

True, duels between jealous husbands and daring lovers of decently indecent young wives have fortunately gone out of fashion; but the moral code of the 1880s is not even the main issue of Fontane's novel. He deals with the extremely subtle mechanisms of manipulation. Von Instetten, Effi's husband, has developed a system of intimidation with which he tries to subdue his wife. He exposes her to local mysteries, knowing that her vivid imagination will transform them into haunting and obsessive visions. Effi is, in short, the victim of constant psychological terrorism. There is hardly any doubt about the "modernity" and permanence of such strategies. It speaks decidedly in favour of Fontane and *Effi Briest* that one of West Germany's most "progressive" film directors, the late Rainer W. Fassbinder, felt sufficiently committed to its message to make a film of the novel (with Hanna Schygulla in the title-role). The result was not only an adequate film-version but the homage of a critical intellectual to his spiritual great-grandfather.

by the rigid code of honour in which he is entrapped. When he forces Effi to leave him, he knows that his private life is ruined for ever. These are dimensions of the novel that the film conveys extremely well.

“Be in love with wisdom”, he wrote to one of his friends at the end of his life. The passion for wisdom purified the mind: that was Fontane’s creed, as it was also the watchword of his

**Subscribe -
and be sure of
each issue**

ENCOUNTER

ONE YEAR
UK £18.00
USA/Canada \$39.00 (air freight)
India £20 (air freight)
Elsewhere £19.00 (surface)
Air rate on request

Full-time students
UK £14.40. USA/Canada \$31.20 (air freight).
Elsewhere £15.20 (surface). Please state place and
course of study.

Payment by sterling or dollar cheque, money order,
National Giro (no. 501 1752), or quote American
Express account number.

Order by coupon below or similar letter.

To: ENCOUNTER, 44 Great Windmill Street,
London W1V 7PA, England
Please send me ENCOUNTER for one year starting
with the _____ issue.
I enclose _____ (payment)
NAME _____
ADDRESS _____

ZIP (USA) _____

last hero, Dubslav von Stechlin, a man whose passion had drawn him to self-sufficient solitude.

Despite Fontane's obvious interest in working people, he refused to believe that the individual was completely conditioned by social circumstances. He was always eager to point out that the moral integrity of an individual never depends on his status. The passion for wisdom in Fontane's understanding included the suffering inseparable from it. The aware human being, he knew, has more problems to worry about, and suffers in consequence. This is the situation of Stechlin, a true aristocrat whose love for nature is as genuine as his longing for true and lasting values. And this was also the situation of Theodor Fontane, of whom Thomas Mann said: "He had to become an old man in order to grow fully aware of himself."

Lake Stechlin, his last novel, contains two of the *leitmotifs* of Fontane's life: his love for and criticism of Britain, the country of his dreams; and his view of the individual.

"England. There was a time when my fondness for that country was almost unconditional. Not surprisingly. In those days people of my sort used to say: 'Well, if we didn't love England, what else could we love?' This complete idealisation of England was part of my life. But that was quite some time ago. Society is decaying there now because the cult of the 'Golden Calf' is continuously growing; people have become mere jobbers, while pretending

to be the upper class of the world. Sadly, they are so false. They say 'Christ', and they mean 'commerce'."

No doubt, Fontane came to believe that England had betrayed her true European task of exercising a mediating influence upon the Continent by engaging herself almost exclusively in affairs overseas. But Fontane's final synthesis was apolitical. It was conveyed by the words with which Dubslav von Stechlin concluded his life:

"The 'ego' is nothing at all—we must thoroughly grasp this thought. An eternal law enforces itself, that is all; and that enforcement, even if it is called 'death', must not terrify us. Accepting this eternal law calmly—that is what human ethics means. That is what keeps human beings afloat."

It is not surprising that Fontane was rediscovered in West Germany on a larger scale in the late 1960s, during a period of sharp intellectual criticism of the post-War *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle) and the *Wohlstandsgesellschaft* (welfare state). For Fontane taught us that there can be no social progress of any value at the expense of human ethics. There can be no lasting growth in a society that does not believe in the primacy of education. And there can be no true education without responsibility and self-criticism (the ability "to write a letter full of question marks", as Fontane put it); without human concern, commitment, and love.

The Flower Box

(detail from an oil painting of a Florentine roof-garden)

Where two walls met, upon the lower one
A terra-cotta box for flowers stood, set
A little "out of true". August: near-blue
Sharp-angled shadows on the terrace floor,
Between, below, white garden furniture.
The walls gleamed white; beyond, two conifers
Stood in small flowers, their trunks' slight curves
Rising to mottled darknesses, above blue hills,
The inlaid roofscape's domes and towers.

The picture framed and hung, lived-with a year,
The box seemed sometimes to confuse: the eye,
Across a room, construed perspective wrong,
A wall seemed oddly turned. "The art, to know
What to leave out. . . ." It had to go:
I covered it with green, a blur of bloom.
No one could know it ever there,
As if some handyman had shifted it
To stand among those others on the floor.

Two centuries, and some sharp eye will stare
Into a patch of green transparency,
See what I hid, and wonder why,
Be moved by its slow emergence there.

John Loveday

Books Encountered

The Music Lover's Literary Companion. Compiled by DANNIE and JOAN ABSE. Robson Books, £14.95.

Lively, graphic, and poetry-laden anthology of writing about music, instruments, musicians, and musical occasions, from authors good and often great, as well as Mendelssohn, Paganini, Berlioz, Beethoven, Wagner, Stravinsky, Casals, Brendel, and Menuhin. I laughed aloud at Bernard Levin on a Wexford operatic glissando.

Power, Modernity and Sociology. By RAYMOND ARON. Edward Elgar, £25.00.

Ten penetrating essays, edited by Aron's daughter Dominique Schnapper, translated by Peter Morris, and introduced by S. N. Eisenstadt. Three, from 1950, 1960 and 1965, deal with class, rather repetitively; but this respects Aron's reluctance to fiddle with his own texts. Still not the compilation on Marxism that remains possible, but a start.

Edward Lear in the Levant: Travels in Albania, Greece, and Turkey in Europe, 1848-1849. Compiled and edited by SUSAN HYMAN. John Murray, £15.95.

I once called Lear's landscapes "uninteresting": the illustrations in this skilful account, drawn from letters, journals, and a recently rediscovered diary, give that libel the lie. The colours are delicate, the line-drawings supple and often witty, the descriptions vivid and sharp. A gem.

Dickens: a Biography. By FRED KAPLAN. Hodder & Stoughton, £17.95.

The first full-length biography for several decades, this uses several new sources for Dickens's family relations; but its rather reproving tone and unexuberant prose make it a sad comparison with Edgar Johnson's 1952 study, which gave an abiding sense of Dickens's genius, and will probably outlast it.

We Dream of Honour: John Berryman's Letters to his Mother. Edited by RICHARD J. KELLY. Norton, £15.95.

Revealing both overtly, because confessional and perhaps intended as a diary, and unconsciously, because most likely Oedipal, these letters chart Berryman's creative but self-destructive life in the shorthand of daily concerns, gradually growing more clipped and gloomy as drink and compulsive philandering lead towards suicide. Heart-breaking.

The Essential Osbert Lancaster: An Anthology in Brush and Pen. Selected and introduced by EDWARD LUCIE-SMITH. Barrie & Jenkins, £15.95.

A real plum-pudding: excerpts from his two autobiographical works, from travel books, from essays and verse on the English, from the Littlehampton saga, and from architectural writings, all liberally seasoned with drawings, paintings, and cartoons, plus an unpublished lecture on stage design. Worth close study for the subtle fun.

A Culture for Democracy: Mass Communication and the Cultivated Mind in Britain Between the Wars. By D. L. LEMAHIEU. Clarendon Press, Oxford, £35.00.

Fascinating, immensely detailed, and possibly wrong-headed analysis of the rise of mass "culture" through popular newspapers, film, gramophone, and radio, and the varying responses of "elitist" guardians of (true) culture to resist, capitulate, or attempt to raise public taste from mass-produced commercial pap. Wrong-headed? Professor LeMahieu would object to my quotation-marks and parenthesis. He sees J. B. Priestley's broadcasts as emblems of a common culture. Ho hum.

The Open Garden: A Story with four essays. By CHRISTOPHER MILNE. Methuen, £4.95.

Charming, minutely observant essays on the natural world, plus a reprint of *The Windfall* (1985), a version of the Eden story, with delicate engravings by Kenneth Lindley. Less confessional than Milne's earliest books, which exorcised the legacy of his father (A. A. Milne) and "Christopher Robin", but enchanting all the same.

Understanding Modern Architecture. By PATRICK NUTTGENS. Unwin Hyman, £14.95.

Adroitly illustrated, technically informative, and subtly discriminating, this is a useful book for non-specialists wanting to go beyond the HRH-v.-Stumps controversy and evaluate differing specimens of the "international style". Nuttgens admits that a new London designed by Richard Rogers would be horrible.

The Arts in a State: A Study of Government Arts Policies from Ancient Greece to the Present. By JOHN PICK with contributions from RAZAK AJALA and MALCOLM HEY ANDERTON. Bristol Classical Press (226 North Street, Bedminster, Bristol BS3 1JD), £5.95.

Hard-headed, pugnacious polemic against policies which (a) regard culture as a tool for social engineering, attracting tourists, or developing less favoured regions, and (b) involve simply "funding". Professor Pick points out that most of "the arts" in Britain have been commercially successful, and that arts policy should really stress educating more people to enjoy them.

Oscar Wilde. By PETER RABY. Cambridge University Press, £22.50, paper, £7.95.

Handy primer in a series so far ranging from Ben Jonson to Samuel Beckett. "Wilde's ability to mimic, to quote and to reflect is an additional reminder to avoid constructing too solemn or too constant a persona for the man as Artist." Well said; but, although the book quotes many good jokes, it sometimes ignores its own warning.

The Natives are Restless. By IDRIES SHAH. Octagon Press, £8.95.

Painfully comic sequel to *Darkest England* (1987), earlier adventures from this intrepid Afghan explorer of Britain's social jungles. "The English are no dottier than anyone else: you can find oddness anywhere. With them, unlike other peoples, the characteristic tends to be strongly purposeful." Quite—which, as Idries Shah points out, can mean either "completely" or "not completely".

Living in an Alibi Society: A Catalogue of Pretensions. By NICHOLAS A. H. STACEY. Rubicon Press, £9.95.

"Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom must, like a man, undergo the fatigue of supporting it." Armed with this motto from Tom Paine, the author examines pretexts people use to avoid its logic. His essays range over class, manners, cowardice, intellectuals, businessmen and their bad image, and language. Fascinating and wise.

Combating the Terrorists: Democratic Responses to Political Violence. Edited by H. H. TUCKER. Facts on File, £13.95.

Seven experts offer useful factual essays and propose (among other things) international cooperation: Samuel T. Francis on the US; Juliet Lodge on the European Community; Arthur Aughey on Ulster; Alison Jamieson on Italy; Edward Moxon-Browne and Peter Janke on Spain; David Schiller on internationalism.

Shetland. By BOBBY TULLOCH. Macmillan, £14.95.

Dazzling verbal and colour-photographical record of life and wildlife on these remote Northern islands, by the former local warden of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, himself a native of the second biggest island, Yell. He looks rather like a bearded seal, which may have facilitated his marvellous close-up shots.

Identifying Ivan: A Case Study in Legal Psychology. By WILLEM A. WAGENAAR. Harvester-Wheatsheaf, £14.95.

Extremely disturbing account of the possible pitfalls, legal and otherwise, in eye-witness identification of suspects, apropos John Demjanjuk, whose conviction as "Ivan the Terrible" of the Treblinka death camp is on appeal with the Israel Supreme Court. Its verdict is expected in April 1989.

R.M.

POINTS OF THE COMPASS

Last Days of the Emperor

By Brian Moeran



MID-OCTOBER and the Emperor still ails. My taxi driver takes me from Tokyo Station to the hotel via the Imperial Palace, that curious mixture of faded green lawns, disabled pine trees, Sysyphean walls and swan-encircling moat that marks the empty centre of the capital and black hole of the rising sun.

There are many more people than usual crossing the vast expanse that separates the thronging office-blocks from the palace precincts—in twos and threes for the most part, but interspersed with shuffling busloads of guided tourists, backs broken by decades of hard labour given in the service of the one for whose health they now come to pray—and sign their names.

Two middle-aged women stop in their tracks, turn and make a final bow in the direction of the palace, before diving underground to catch a train. My taxi driver thinks it's all a bit overdone, this business of the Emperor's health. After all, life has to go on. People, ordinary people, have to make a living. How is he anyway? I ask, and find myself being given a full description of how His Majesty had discharged blood from his rectum and received more in exchange in today's transfusion—the 22nd in a row. It's just as well he isn't still a god, the driver adds. There would've been no blood suitable for his transfusions.

It may not matter, but the Emperor's condition is clearly followed closely by one and all. Each day has its 'vital signs', listed in the morning newspapers, and detailing in tabular form the Emperor's temperature, blood pressure, pulse and respiration rates, as measured by physicians attached to the Imperial Household Agency at nine in the morning, two in

the afternoon, and seven o'clock in the evening. This morning the 87 year old monarch "received a shave".

Two months have passed between these first field notes and the completed essay now going to press, and still the Emperor ails. It may well be, however, that he will not last into—or very long into—the New Year, and that by the time this edition of *ENCOUNTER* reaches the bookstalls, he will have finally passed on.¹ Pity the writer, then, who has to finesse his tenses, and allow him to play this bridging game, not in clubs or in hearts, but in the no trumps of prose—the present and past historic.

It is not often that one man's physical condition can markedly affect his country's economy. While one or two bankers might claim them as exaggerated, estimates suggest that the Japanese GNP will decrease by between 0.1 and 0.2% as a result of the Emperor's illness. Some go as far as to suggest that the effect will be as much as 0.5%—no mean feat for an octogenarian whose main interest in life has been marine biology.

However imprecise the estimates, it is certainly a fact that businesses have been suffering. Usually, the autumn months herald the season of weddings and travel in Japan. Both these industries, together with the services that depend upon them, have found themselves in trouble as people put off travel arrangements and postponed their weddings. The most spectacular of these was the decision by the pop singer, Itsuki Hiroshi, to cancel a one billion yen wedding reception due to have taken place on 5 October. It was felt that he and his wife-to-be, Kazu Yūko, would be better advised not to indulge in this kind of marriage potlatch while the Emperor was in such a sorry state.

So hotels, travel agencies, caterers and cleaners have all been losing money. Their business has been down by 50% and they claim that year-end party reservations have been less than half the number they were last year. Advertising agencies, too, have been experiencing problems. There has been a wide range of scheduling changes, incurring heavy financial losses—30-40 million yen for medium sized and 300 million yen for large agencies, with Dentsū, the grand champion of them all, losing 100 million yen a day, or so it is said. Some commercials have had to be reshot because parts of them have been deemed "improper". Nissan erased part of a backing song which asked "Are you feeling good?"; Lion removed the word "new" from one of its products; and another—unnamed—company the words "congratulations" and "birth". Such euphemisms extend, of course, to death itself. That fatal day has commonly been referred to as "X Day".

Such problems of language have threatened financial disaster for the music world. The Japanese are keen aficionados of classical music, in particular of the works of Beethoven, and December is the season for that great composer's Ninth Symphony. During the end of year concerts, this piece is to be performed throughout the country no fewer than 210 times, and all the major orchestras are due to give between five and eight concerts by the end of the year.

So what?, the innocent may ask. Well, the question has

¹ ED. NOTE: News of Emperor Hirohito's death came on 7 January, as these pages were being passed for press.

been whether the orchestras should play Beethoven's Ninth or not. Why all the fuss? Because of Schiller's *Hymn of Joy* which, in its Japanese translation, invites all present—friends, beautiful gods, and maidens of paradise—to become drunk in the *sake* of fire and enter the sacred palace of Heaven.

Clearly, it would be improper under the circumstances for a whole choir of five dozen people to give full vent to their voices and sing these words out upon the death of a man who was once seen to be a "god". Not surprisingly, therefore, the NHK Symphony Orchestra has considered postponing its performances of Beethoven's Ninth.

But, as a rival orchestra member pointed out, the NHK Symphony Orchestra has the full financial backing of Japan's national broadcasting corporation. It can thus afford to disappoint 3,500 people and lose something like 100 million yen for five cancelled concerts. It is the same with the Tokyo Metropolitan and Yomiuri Japan Symphony Orchestras, whose musicians are assured of a living and whose managements can afford to sound reverent and behave according to what are deemed to be the "proper" canons of decorum.

NONE OF THE other orchestras, however, have such financial luxury. Some have been employing soloists and choirs for as long as half a year, and when they are dealing with more than 90 people, but are only going to perform the symphony twice, they cannot afford to cancel their year-end concerts. To make matters worse, Beethoven's Ninth has become *the* musical event of these orchestras' calendar. It brings in an audience that is three to four times larger than at any normal concert, and produces an income of about three million yen at one sitting—a figure which can come to 20% of an orchestra's total annual income. No wonder the manager of one such orchestra has been praying for the Emperor's continued long life and prosperity.

It is not just linguistic symbolism that has affected the way in which the Japanese economy has been obliged to respond to the Emperor's ill health. Colour symbolism has also presented its problems. Autumn is the time when school children participate in their annual sports days. Normally, they are divided into two teams, each sporting a red or white *hachimaki* headband, but this year the overly auspicious red has been replaced in some schools by blue.

Along the same lines, a department store with a long standing relationship with the Imperial family withdrew a certain form of red fish-paste from its counters because it was a symbol of celebration. Or so went a Japanese newspaper report. A representative of the department store in question, however, denied the story and said that the paste had simply "run out". But in another department store in the Ginza, Waterford-Wedgwood put on a special display of a slightly garish, but very popular, crimson tea-set called Ruby Tonquin—only to be asked to remove it since it was seen to be "inappropriately gaudy".

Firework displays are another colourful event that have suffered from the Imperial illness. And it has been, indeed, such events that have been most prone to cancellation: first the Chūnichi Dragons called off their celebrations after win-

ning the Central League baseball pennant; then the *sumō* wrestler Chiyonofuji failed to have a victory parade following his success in the autumn tournament. One after another, planned events have been reduced to no more than a few lines in the daily newspapers. The Central Unions of the National Federation of Agricultural Mutual Aids Societies cancelled an outdoors rally of 250,000 farmers in Yoyogi Park. An amateur band concert due to be put on by Yamaha at the *Budōkan* Hall was also put off—at a cost of tens of millions of yen. Even the Australian Embassy decided to withhold a reception at which some Australian prints were to have been presented to Japan's National Museum of Modern Art. "In deference to his Majesty the Emperor's current illness", went the wording of the official communiqué.

There is no way of knowing just why these "self restrictive" measures have been taking place. School teachers may decide to cancel their pupils' baseball competition; employees in a bank to start wearing dark suits; local bureaucrats to tell a visiting British academic that he should not mention the *Sun* and *Daily Star* attacks on the Emperor in his lecture to the people of a provincial city. It would seem that there is nobody who has been ultimately responsible for any decision. It may have been a local education authority in one case, a bank group in another, government officials in yet another. But once a decision has been made, everyone falls in line. Nobody appears to question anything.

Is it really that the Japanese are so well trained that they tend to follow one another like sheep? The Hakuhōdō Institute of Life and Living suggests that this has been the main reason for the boom in self-imposed restrictions, but I myself wonder. Surely, we need to look more closely at the role of government and the media, both with regard to the Emperor's illness and in contemporary Japanese society as a whole.

HALF WAY BETWEEN the business centre and the palace grounds, the media are encamped—literally. There is a row of broadcasting vehicles with cameras fixed to their roofs and trained on the palace, whose pale green roof gleams dully in the rain that has been pouring down this past month ("As bad as England. We had only two fine days the whole of September"). Reporters and cameramen sit huddled in tents outside important points of movement; watching, smoking, chatting, waiting for the final hour. The vigil is a 24 hour one, and it is maintained inside as well as out. Those employed in the News departments have to take it in turn to sleep in the office, where they throw down their bedding in smoke-filled meeting rooms and shave away their sleepless nights the following morning, relieved that the Emperor has survived and spared them the onerous task of putting out a special edition that particular night. Some, like the employees of Fuji Television, have been luckier: shifted to hotel rooms near the Imperial Palace at their company's expense (between twenty and forty million yen a week, by all accounts).

In such circumstances, anything is worth reporting—not just the movements of the Crown Prince (who, incidentally, called for people to resume their normal lives), but snippets of

relevant irrelevance. Tokyo's Disneyland decided, after all, to go ahead with its Mickey Mouse birthday party between 1 October and 23 November. Extreme Right-wing groups, who are notorious for the way in which they drive around major cities in convoys of paramilitary-style trucks and jeeps, blaring out anti-communist slogans and prerecorded military music through their public address systems, have turned down the volume of their loudspeakers out of deference to the Emperor. Singer-guitarist Eric Clapton took out a £60,000 insurance policy against the possible cancellation of his Japanese tour. There was a shortage of paper since it was nearing the end of the year and all the stationery for Shōwa 64, or 1989 by our method of reckoning time, had already been printed. At one point, it looked as if the government ministries might have to reprint everything—and the Post Office its New Year cards, stocks of which had already been sent out early in November (although not put on sale until December). Now things look better, but, whatever happens, banks will have to alter all their computer records, since loan repayments will need to be changed from the present Shōwa period to whatever new era the Imperial Household Agency devises for the future.

THE STORIES ARE endless. One or two of them—like Prince Aya returning to England to take up his studies at Oxford University—would probably make news, whatever the situation. So, too, would American action on the liberalisation of Japan's rice market. But the fact that his grandson has kept flying back and forth between England and Japan whenever the Emperor's condition worsens has made more news out of news—as did the story that the Japanese and American governments asked the US Rice Millers' Association to drop its petition to have the rice market opened up.

Other stories have been little more than rumour, fuelled by fanciful imagination. But the point is that the stories have continued, and it has been the media that have played a vital role. They have not just disseminated information—occasionally the wrong information, as readers of the *Mainichi Daily News* learned one morning late in September when they read that "the demise of His Majesty the Emperor has plunged the nation into profound grief". The media have dictated the mode by which that information has been relayed—front page headlines; especially sombre, slightly hushed voices; black suits for newscasters—all to ensure that everyone throughout the country is aware of the gravity of the situation.

So the situation has become grave, precisely because of the gravity in which the situation has been presented. A nicely circular, self-reinforcing state of affairs which has led to the cancellation of comedy shows on television, to famous personalities putting off their weddings, and to children being deprived of their annual sports days. In a way, it is almost as if the media have been "cutting off their nose to spite their face", for by emphasising the Emperor's ill health, they have been putting the brakes on their own economic growth. Art, sports, pop star appearances, are all events sponsored by the media—events from which the media prosper and promote

themselves, events upon which the media have built their economic power. So why have they kept harping on about the Emperor?

To some extent, the problem would appear to lie in the very nature of "news". In the 20th century, news has become the means by which "history" is created. Daily events are recorded by the media, whose journalists and reporters now act as our historians. Precisely because of this role, they occasionally look back and bring old news out for a re-airing. This, indeed, is what the commercial television stations are likely to do when the Emperor does finally die. Many have planned two days of programmes that will look back over the Shōwa Period. Nothing else will be shown, apart from news bulletins.

So, there is an overwhelming need to create new news and to sustain the past as "news", rather than as something which is "history", for history is "old hat". The organisation and *raison d'être* of the media is based on an ability to keep events new, to turn everyday occurrences into "events". Every possible trick of the trade must be used to achieve this end, so that the dissemination of a story (like the department store's red fish-paste being taken off the shelves) is news, as is the counter denial, as is the argument about who was responsible for the dissemination of the story in the first place. It is ironical that, for those of us who try to analyse contemporary society and culture, success can only come if our analysis is "newsworthy". We can never escape the encircling mesh of news.

The Emperor's illness should have placed, once and for all, the role of Japan's "information agency" beyond question or critique. News is information; it is not criticism of any kind. This is the real meaning of phrases like *intelligent city* and *intelligent office* (together with its Japanese equivalents *chiteki* and *chisei*) that have recently haunted the advertisements on Japan's transportation systems. Intelligence is these days defined by a knowledge of information. In this respect, although Japanese newspapers have been said to be the only slightly Left-wing force in the country, the media in fact end up supporting an education system which emphasises rote learning, provides human fodder for hungry employers, and produces the 86% of "sheep" referred to by the Hakuhōdō Institute of Life and Living.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN when the Emperor dies? That is one question nobody has so far answered very satisfactorily. After all, 63 years is a long time for anyone to remember things clearly and anyway the Emperor was a god then. When the Emperor Taishō died, everybody had a three day holiday—at least that is what most people *think* happened. Certainly, it is what most school children have been looking forward to this time round. But others are confused about what they should do. Owners of *pachinko* and "soapland" massage parlours, doubtless aware that they will not have many customers anyway, have declared that they will observe a one day holiday. The same attitude will probably be taken by businesses, although there is doubt about the International Stock Exchange and some department stores

have apparently said that they will not close at all. Instead, all employees will wear black ribbons on their uniforms or on the lapels of their suits. And, although commercial television companies may stop all normal programmes for two days, no commercials will interrupt the documentaries and news bulletins. Here, at least, Japan's commercial democracy will have to yield to the old imperial democracy.

Of course, the prime reason for the confusion has lain in the fact that the Emperor's status has changed—or been changed—since 1945. Although this is now recognised by the Japanese people, it has sometimes seemed that the Imperial Household Agency is still clinging to the old mythology of divinity. It has steadfastly refused to say what has been wrong with the Emperor. There has been a long-held suspicion that he must have cancer and that the doctors knew this when they opened him up and had a look inside his stomach a few months ago. But the fact that they have said nothing has led ordinary people to suggest that even an amateur would recognise the Emperor's cancerous condition, if given the opportunity. For some reason, the Imperial Household Agency has refused to accept that His Imperial Majesty might, after all, be human and suffer from diseases that are not supposed to afflict gods.

This refusal to accept the possibility of mortality has not been limited to the Imperial Agency. Two members of Right-wing groups attacked the Asahi Newspaper Company's Mito offices, after it published an article suggesting that the Emperor had cancer. Furthermore, a group of 75 constitutional scholars and lawyers suggested that the mass media were threatening the principle of the Constitution by treating the Emperor as head of state. The group stated further that it would oppose moves to fly black draped flags or cancel school if the Emperor died. Similarly, in reporting the main opposition party's objection to state sponsorship of Imperial succession ceremonies, the *Japan Times* used the phrase "*in the event of a succession to the throne*". In some people's minds, he has clearly been immortal, destined to live forever in the folds of his jaundice and daily blood transfusions.

BY REPORTING matters in this way, of course, the media have served to keep the Emperor's condition as "news", so that here, too, he has taken on an aura of immortality. But what is this business about "head of state"? The issue appears to have emerged with Ambassador Chiba's letters to the *Sun* and the *Daily Star*, when he responded to those British newspapers' attacks on the Emperor, and referred to the latter as "sovereign". This wording was immediately attacked by the Japan Communist party which pointed out that the Emperor was not sovereign since there was no such definition of the Emperor's status in the post-War Constitution.

And how does the Constitution read? "The Emperor shall be the symbol of the state and of the unity of the people, deriving his position from the will of the people with whom resides sovereign power." The Government, in a public statement on 15 October, upheld Ambassador Chiba's view that the Emperor is sovereign, but added the important rider "*vis-à-vis* outsiders", since he acts as sovereign only when

abroad. So, formally at least, he is sovereign rather than "head of state", in the political eye of the Liberal Democratic Party in power, and it is precisely because the Emperor "shall perform only such acts in matters of state as are provided for in this Constitution and he shall not have any powers related to government" that the Japan Socialist Party has opposed any government plan to sponsor Imperial succession rites.

Although a week later the party's leader, Takako Doi, accused the State and the ruling Liberal Democratic Party of moving to use the Emperor politically and to violate the constitutional principle separating politics from religion, this argument has now begun to involve people other than politicians. There have always been some who have called for the abolition of the emperor system, but these have been mainly members of the Japan Communist Party, leftist student groups and a handful of scholars and writers. With the Emperor's continuing illness, however, ordinary members of the public have begun to speak out—collecting signatures, demonstrating in the streets, joining rallies and writing to newspapers in protest at the way in which the media have excessively covered the Emperor's illness and over-reported the cancellation of events, both public and private. These people have formed groups based on local residence, shared religious or political beliefs, or the fact that they are members of families of those killed in the War; and their main objection appears to be that the Emperor has been treated as the head of state, in spite of the Constitution's definition of his role as no more than symbolic.

BUT THE ARGUMENT has gone further than this. The argument about the Emperor's constitutional role has inevitably led to a further discussion about his role in the Pacific War. For the first time perhaps, people have openly begun to dismantle the wall that has shielded young Japanese from the country's past. Was the Emperor in any way responsible for what happened? Should he have been tried as a war criminal? Ought he to have apologised publicly for his nation's "crimes"? Questions like these have been debated publicly—most recently and most notably by the Mayor of Nagasaki, who now finds himself under police protection—and they have led to further discussions about the nature of patriotism, "soft" fascism, and the possibility of a revival of militarism and rearmament. The ironical point here is that it may well have been the initial attacks of the British popular press—notably those made by the *Sun* and *Daily Star*—which made such an impact. By calling the Emperor a "God King" and by highlighting the way in which the British had been treated by the Japanese in the Pacific War, these newspapers could be said to have cleared the way for the Japanese themselves to break down their own taboos. Occasionally, even the muddiest gutter reveals a coin to be treasured.

Let me be clear about one thing, however. I do not wish to condone these newspapers' mode of attack. After all, they were more concerned with highlighting British ideals (patriotism, democracy, sacrifice, bravery, and so on) than with teaching Japanese about the meaning of "freedom of

speech". The important point to make here is that it has been the prolonged illness of the Emperor which has enabled the Japanese to join in public debate. Initially, both government and media created enough fuss to stifle all rational thought. As a result, two million people queued in the rain to sign their names in the Emperor's "get well register"; some of them even knelt in the mud before the Imperial Palace to pay their respects. Government officials cancelled planned trips; television programmes were interrupted hourly to give news of the Emperor's health. It may be that the Liberal Democratic Party was anxious to divert media attention from its members' involvement in illegal share purchases in what is now known as the "Recruit Affair". But it is also true that in the post-War years, the Government has continued to use the Emperor as a tool, a vital symbol of authority over a nation that has, for the greater part of this century, been led to believe that it is one "unique", "homogeneous" "family", presided over by His Imperial Majesty. It is precisely because the Emperor is in fact a symbol with which to control the populace that the Government has allowed his illness and future to remain an issue.

However, the Government may well have miscalculated in its attempts to keep control in this way. Or is it the Imperial

Household Agency that has been pulling the strings? Nobody seems to know. Certainly, neither has reckoned on the ability of Japanese doctors to keep an old and dying man alive. So the longer the Emperor's illness has continued—and the more varied the economic and social ramifications of that illness—the more people have begun to question the Emperor's role in modern Japanese society. But has the debate really been significant? Will it alter the face of contemporary Japanese society? To answer this question, we have to remember that the debate has been conducted *in* the media and that the people of Japan have thereby been subjected to a further bombardment of information. Thus, whatever difference there may have been in the content of this information over the past three months, it may well have passed unnoticed. As we know too well in Britain, the power of the concept of news is such as to deaden the collective mind of any nation.

Or have I got it all wrong? Is it that the Japanese are really beginning to be involved in what Umberto Eco has referred to as "a door-to-door guerrilla battle like provos of Critical Reception"? Can they shift their attention—and mine—from the source of the message (the media) to its destination (the people)? I am not that optimistic, but of one thing I am sure: there will never be another "Emperor".

Conversation In Berwick Street

There's everyfink you want here, everyfink.
Even if you don't want it.

O you must
want that, for that's essential.

We, I think
were speaking of the shops for slaking lust.

If people fink that this is a Red Light
they ought to look abroad. In foreign cities
they got much more than here; nuffing's in sight
but words and window-blinds. No bums or titties.

But there's a kind of pollen in the air:
even the vegetables seem to grow
tumescent: aubergines reflect desire
and flowers lose their innocence, they know
insatiable hungers.

My old man
and his old man before him ran this stall.

And nothing's changed, I said, it was the same
here thirty years ago. They used to call
the same street calls, and innuendo ruled:
It's all for sale. They're lovely. Are they real?
O once they were. Now nobody is fooled
since I have grown much older than I feel.

Anna Adams

EDUCATION

The Decline of the British University

By Geoffrey Strickland



NO GOVERNMENT in this century has aroused more resentment within the British academic community than that of Margaret Thatcher and her Minister of Education and Science; and no government has imposed its will on that community more peremptorily. Confident that it represents the will of the electorate, the Thatcher government insists on accountability and efficiency. Equally

sure that they understand the nation's long-term interests, the universities protest that—in the realm of experiment and ideas—it is they and not the government who understand what efficiency means. However, where the government speaks on most occasions with one voice, the universities reply with many. On the issues of academic freedom and the nature and extent of public funding, they are unanimous: the government should interfere far less, and pay far more. If they must “improve” what has come to be known as their “performance”, the universities have a policy, though one they seek to make acceptable by imposing it as even-handedly as possible. But it is doubtful whether there is otherwise any consensus, or indeed any commonly accepted view of what a university education is: of what it is that needs to be improved or defended from the Philistine. The lack of a common purpose which can be understood in terms that are not excessively banal, or worse, is apparent in their compliance with the more absurd and humiliating of the government's demands for a formal show of accountability. It can be explained by an examination of the simple machinery to which, for the past quarter of a century, all British universities have been geared, and which has determined the survival or otherwise of particular academic disciplines and the success of innovation.

The machinery was already in motion, but it was given irresistible momentum by the Report to Parliament of the Robbins Committee on Higher Education of October 1963. To this universally respected document the origins of the pre-

sent conflict between Parliament and the universities can be traced, together with the unreality of the issues on which they differ.

The Robbins Report declared what it thought future policy should be by refusing to consider what it called “the needs of the nation”.

“In principle, the problem of estimating the number of places required can be approached in two ways: by considering what supply of different kinds of highly educated persons will be required to meet the needs of the nation, or by considering what the demand for places in higher education is likely to be. . . . We have found the first approach impracticable. . . .”

It thus gave expression to the conventional idealism and economic optimism of the time. It also gave qualified approval to the process by which student demand—i.e., the choice of degree course made by “qualified” school leavers—was already dictating the size of university departments and the prosperity or decline of academic disciplines. (The *qualifications* of a school leaver were, apart from the minimum matriculation requirements set by each university, for the departments themselves to lay down.)

The Robbins Report owed its initial popularity to its air of civilised reasonableness, its care to cause the least possible offence. The universities were reassured that they would remain the sole arbiters not only of student qualifications but of what should be studied and taught. No hurtful distinctions were made between different, or different kinds of, discipline. No individual subject was even named. All, through having acquired or being about to acquire a temporary or permanent home, were to be confirmed in their membership of the academic community. This was as true of Physics at Cambridge as of purely (in themselves, no doubt excellent) vocational courses in the new universities which Robbins had recommended should emerge from the former Colleges of Advanced Technology, such as the Bachelor of Science degrees in Catering and Hotel Management in the new University of Surrey.

The Report also called for a continuation of the agreement by which students offered a university place would be assured of adequate financial support from specially allotted local government funds. This was an unobjectionable arrangement in itself, although it ensured that the content of higher education would be determined far less by the decisions of policy-makers in the universities than by the choices of publicly-funded young consumers in an artificial market.

SINCE THE 1960s, various attempts to influence demand by controlling the supply of places, and thus foster what are seen as essential disciplines, have been made by the University Grants Committee. (This body of mainly senior academics, which allocates funds to the universities from the Treasury, has been until now—in principle at least—independent of Her Majesty's Department of Education and Science.) These measures have not been sufficient, however, to reassure Mr Kenneth Baker, the present Secretary of State for Education and Science.

Under the government's new Education Reform Bill, the UGC is to be replaced by a Universities Funding Council, which will enter into direct contract with individual universities, and require that certain disciplines be taught and certain lines of research pursued. The Secretary of State will assume a far more direct responsibility for the ways in which public funds are spent, though his powers have been restricted to some extent by amendments from the House of Lords. It remains to be seen whether the almost unanimous disapproval within the universities of the provisions of the Reform Bill will turn out to be justified. What the universities have not proposed and what it is by no means certain that even the government has in mind, is any alternative to the machinery of student demand.

THE RAVAGES OF that machinery must be apparent to all who are unwilling to accept official claims of academic success. Much good work *has* been done. From the relatively small population of the United Kingdom, a significantly large number of Nobel Prize-winners has emerged. Not all of the numerous distinguished scholars in the Sciences and Humanities have advertised their concern for academic standards by emigrating to a higher salary in the United States.

None the less, if we look back to 1963, we see how the academically second-rate has prospered in the form of narrowly vocational courses, such as the now ubiquitous Business or Management Studies, or soft options in the Humanities—in Media, Classical, or Russian “Studies” (in the last two, little or no actual knowledge of the Greek, Latin or Russian languages is required¹); not to speak of the invalid diet which often passes for English, Sociology, and (my own field) French. Even in these subjects, standards have been maintained to some extent, by an automatic effect of the machinery which ensures that entrance requirements for popular subjects are higher than for those less pleasing, especially since the UGC has placed limits on the numbers each university can admit. But the more demanding and less obviously vocational disciplines, in which it can be easiest to find a place, are often those which find it most difficult to survive.

The excellent degree course in Russian (language, literature, and history) in my own university of Reading is due to close down in a year's time; ironically, it will not benefit from Mr Baker's call, on his return from a visit to the Soviet Union, for more Russian to be taught. A third of the nation's Classics Departments—including those of Aberdeen, Leicester, Aberystwyth and Sheffield, all of which pre-date the

Robbins Report by many years—are to be closed, or have been closed already. The same fate has befallen Departments of Philosophy in six universities; and there may be more to follow, including again those of Aberystwyth and Leicester.

The Robbins Report had recommended dispersing the academic community through the United Kingdom rather than concentrating resources in a few established universities. (This may now seem extravagant but the year was 1963, five years after the publication of Galbraith's *Affluent Society*.) One remedy for the increased imbalance in supply and demand that this further dispersal has created has been for the UGC to require the closure of small departments, especially in the Humanities, while many science departments are to be deprived of research facilities.² Given the lack of demand, Russian, Classics, and Philosophy Departments have tended to be small, and this has been deemed a sufficient reason for their closure. However, the introduction of Classical Studies in the 1970s has ensured since then an actual overall rise in demand, though it is small in comparison with English or Law.

The justification of Classical Studies, from the point of view of the classicist is, incidentally, that without them Departments of Classics would have withered much sooner. Because of their relative popularity, Latin and Greek can still be studied by those few students who possess the requisite motivation and training. The decline of Classics in British schools, including the independent schools (for the annual Bradfield College Greek play, given in its open-air Greek theatre, most of the cast now learn merely the *sounds*), can again be traced back to the 1960s, when university departments of English, History, and Modern Languages ceased to require of their students a knowledge of Latin up to the level of the General Certificate of Education. It was hoped at the time that schoolchildren might instead choose to study modern European languages. However, the decline of Classics coincides with a decline in the study of languages as a whole, which, with that of mathematics and the natural sciences, has been for many years a matter of well-publicised concern.

PRINCIPLES OF student demand have come to dominate the school curriculum as well. The stipulation that entrance to a university—to read any subject whatever—should be dependent on examination success, at the age of sixteen, in mathematics, English, one other language, and one natural science was waived by the schools examinations boards, and the universities with which they were associated, several years before the Robbins Report appeared. It might have been thought reasonable to look to the universities more than to any other institution for a revival of learning in educational establishments throughout the nation as a whole. But universities are self-governing bodies in which heads of department owe their first duty to their colleagues. For each head of department, the maintenance of the supply of students overrides almost every other consideration. To stop or reverse the present machinery would require acts of self-abnegation or betrayal beyond the capacity even of the British professional classes.

An outside body, such as Parliament, might seem better

¹ It is, presumably, self-evident why Classical or Russian Studies in which all texts are in English translation are second-rate in comparison with Classics and Russian. The case against Media, Peace, and Women's Studies, which have prospered in recent years in British Universities, now has to be argued. The reader is therefore referred to Antony Flew's “Corruptions among the Clerks” in *The Salisbury Review* for June 1988.

² Since this article was written, the UGC has recommended the closure of many university Physics Departments, including Leicester's, where in October 1988 Kenneth Baker inaugurated a new space centre. See *The Times* (1 November 1988).

placed to implement changes which no university is able to bring about on its own. Parliament also has the advantage of not having to pretend that the universities are serving the nation well enough to justify their absorption of public funds. However, to say this is to underestimate the difficulties of alleviating rather than aggravating the disease, especially when something needs urgently to be done and—even more important from the point of view of a radical reforming government—when it is necessary to be seen to be doing something.

The present government, unfortunately, has shown little sign of an ability to address itself to causes rather than symptoms. This is apparent, above all, in the extraordinary farce which they and the universities seem to regard as a way of reassuring each other that eventually all will be well. There is nothing particularly farcical, it is true, in the proposed Universities Funding Council; though it is no secret from Ministers that paying for results by contractual agreement makes sense only to the extent to which results can be anticipated; academic research, for instance, has benefits which are neither immediate nor predictable. What is farcical in an Aristophanic way is the agreement between universities, the UGC, and the Secretary of State for Education and Science that something called “performance” should henceforth be monitored, and that universities’ receipt of public funds should depend on their use of “performance indicators” as specified in the Jarratt Report of 1985 to the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals.

The “performance indicator” has already provided the subject of at least two academic studies, both of which have been recommended in *The Times Higher Educational Supplement* (27 May 1988) by the Professor of Educational Administration in the London University Institute of Education. Universities are no longer, we are warned, in the “sellers’ market” of twenty years ago. In the present “hybrid of bureaucratic regulation and market competition”, both “bureaucrats and customers” need to have “objectively verifiable indicators of performance”—which, to quote from Appendix G of the Jarratt Report, should include: “market share of undergraduate applications (by subjects)”, “graduation rates and classes of degrees” (in other words, making certain that in the final examinations there are not too many third classes or failures); “attraction of research funds”; “papers at conferences”; and “teaching quality”.

It is pleasant to see something about “teaching quality”, but on turning back to page 11 of the Report one finds that “the UGC has no present intention of taking into account quality of teaching because it has no reliable way of assessing it. . . .” Honest, informed, and intelligent opinion is, from the point of view of the Jarratt Report, *unreliable*—unless it is an opinion expressed in print concerning another opinion expressed in print. In that case, it will count as a “peer review”. The number of printed pages attributable every year to members of each department in my own university now count among our claims to efficiency—they will include even the

pages you are reading. I have called this an Aristophanic farce. I am referring specifically to the moment in which the dispute between Aeschylus and Euripides in *The Frogs* is decided by weighing their works on the scales. It should not be necessary to explain a joke, but this is clearly a joke that has gone too far. Not only does counting pages promote verbosity for its own sake, but the number is, of course, meaningless—unless to a properly qualified reader who will, in any case, judge authors by the appropriate criteria.

A REMEDY TO all this nonsense has been proposed in a recent pamphlet by Elie Kedourie, Professor of Politics at the University of London.³ He attributes the increasing interference of government in university affairs—and the compliance of the universities with what they, rightly or wrongly, believe that the government requires—to the growing dependence, since the War, of the universities on the Treasury. Professor Kedourie argues that the universities will become themselves again only when they have become once more genuinely self-governing bodies, depending on their own financial resources and on nothing else. This, he suggests, may be possible if changes in the law allow expenditure by parents on the education of their children to count against tax, thus making the parent rather than the university (as in some other countries) the recipient of public munificence. (And it “cannot be beyond the wit of fiscal experts to make suitable provision for the hard cases. . . .”)

Professor Kedourie’s recommendation has much to be said for it. It could, for one thing, enable universities to shed the incubus of administration, which has grown with increased dependence on public funds and is noticeably more of a financial burden outside the relatively well-endowed and self-sufficient Oxford and Cambridge. However, universities which could shake themselves free and rediscover their place in the outside world would be different from those which years ago began to be absorbed by the state. Nor is there any inherent guarantee that they would be any less subject to the disastrous consequences of student demand. How could any university Senate, even that of an independent body, object to a course which was popular and brought in the cash? How could any department afford to refuse entry to students merely because they were academically unsuited? Or produce a failure rate in its final examinations which gave the department and the university a bad name? Government can, after all, at times have its uses and defend the university from the pressures of both real and artificial markets, as in the administration since the First Republic of France’s *Grandes Écoles*.

The integrity of academic disciplines in France has been maintained partly as a result of a simple selection process which has always ensured that entrance to the principal institutions of higher learning will be through competitive examination alone; the competitive *agrégation* in the main disciplines ensures those who pass them a teaching post in a school or university, for life. To compensate for such exclusiveness, however, it has been necessary to open the universities to manageable numbers, who impose intolerable strains

³ *Diamonds into Glass: The Government and the Universities*. By ELIE KEDOURIE. Centre for Policy Studies (8 Wilfred Street, London SW1E 6PL), £3.90.

on the resources of libraries and laboratories and have little or no personal contact with their teachers. Those who—like the present Under-Secretary for Education and Science, Robert Jackson—ask why we are unable to cope with similar numbers in our own universities should read the eloquent plea of the eminent French mathematician Laurent Schwartz for a strict *numerus clausus* like our own,⁴ or hear the reports of Modern Languages students who spend a year in French universities and are able to compare the advantages of both systems.

None the less, higher education in France, even at its worst, is free from the pressures of the market as we know them here. My French colleagues do not have to produce glossy brochures showing their campus at its most photogenic, or hold merry “open days” to tout for student custom. During the *rentrée* this September, long queues of French students waiting to register were confronted at certain Faculties by notices bearing the desperate confession: “*Ici on sélectionne.*”

IN ANY CASE, the best aspects of French education could be reproduced here only if we could miraculously re-enact 100 years of French history. It should be plain—especially to those who profess a conservative political philosophy—that the decline in our education will be checked only if deep-rooted assumptions and long-established customs are modified in such a way as to minimise their most pernicious effects. One such adjustment might be contrived, for example (irrespective of whether Professor Kedourie’s severing of links with the state were to occur), by encouraging two tendencies which can already be clearly seen: the first towards a devaluation of the first British university degree; the second towards an increasingly obvious distinction between two kinds of degree course—the vocational and the academic.

The more vocational courses will most probably continue to thrive, as at present; and in so far as they are what they claim to be, they deserve their success. Their membership of the academic community need appear no more incongruous than has been the case for many years in various distinguished American universities.

By academic, I mean the kind of education which is difficult to justify in other than academic terms, but which it would be absurd to regard as having no justification at all. It is this kind of education which at the present time in the United Kingdom is most under threat, and it can be fostered most effectively if it is seen as materially advantageous to pursue it. Far too little distinction is now made between those who foresee a career in teaching or research or are motivated by simple intellectual curiosity, and those who regard a vocational degree or a degree of any kind whatever as a necessary qualification for some other field of employment. The Robbins Report—with what should have been seen as predictably depressing consequences—went out of its way to encourage the notion that “full-time higher education” was held in growing “social esteem”; and in many professions, among them librarianship, advancement is virtually

barred to all except graduates. In these professions, social mobility is more restricted than in the past and there has been a growth industry, to which universities have willingly lent themselves, in the devising of exclusive qualifications. It would be to the advantage of everyone—including those of us who have to teach bored and boring students—if more employers were to follow the example of some banks and financial institutions, and attach no importance at all to a university degree.

STUDENTS WHOSE motivation and academic interest are genuine want to go on, exploring and reading further. Universities will deserve their reputation only if they meet the demands of this kind of student. Yet academic customs and administrative arrangements present a number of obstacles. A graduate in English, for example, is unlikely to receive any help, financial or otherwise, if he or she wishes to take another degree in, say, Russian or Philosophy. He may, however, receive a grant if he wishes to embark on research leading to a doctoral dissertation, or to a higher degree in his first subject. Graduate Schools and MA courses in British universities, hastily devised as part of the general hunt for student numbers, are all too often merely poor imitations of the long-established American Graduate Schools which cater for those serious enough to stay on. (From my experience of teaching both in Britain and the United States, and from recent discussion with students who have been taught under both systems, I know that the American BA degree can be at least as demanding and rewarding as the British.) The units that make up the American higher degree may include courses taught to graduates and undergraduates alike—a distinguished Professor of Classics in the University of California, who majored in English for his first degree and happened to be a gifted linguist, first studied Greek as a graduate student.

As an alternative to the often stultifying options open to highly motivated British graduates who wish to go on, it ought to be possible for them to move to another undergraduate degree course with the practical blessing of all concerned—an arrangement which would become all the more feasible if the Cambridge Tripos system were to be adopted more generally, and undergraduate courses were divided into two separate “parts”, each lasting one or two years. Such an arrangement need be only an alternative to those which exist at present, and its attractiveness could be tested accordingly. Those who wished to go straight into post-graduate research could still do so, although (since an alternative existed) it would not be necessary for them to embark on the often premature and desperate search for something interesting to say to which the present alarming number of unfinished theses bears testimony.

The corresponding degree-awarding conventions could be uncomplicated, and all the simpler for being standardised throughout the United Kingdom, an overdue and by no means radical reform in itself: BA or BSc for two parts of a Tripos or its equivalent; an MA for anything after that; an M.Phil or Ph.D, as at present, for a dissertation. A graduate

⁴ Laurent Schwartz, *Pour sauver l'Université* (Paris, 1983).

seeking employment might be able to say that he held an MA in History, French, and Arabic. The opportunity to extend the range of qualifications could remain open indefinitely, and there is no reason why each part of the degree should be studied in the same university. In many disciplines—certainly in the two I know at first hand, English and Modern Languages—there is a limit to the time that can profitably be spent listening to lectures and writing essays. Performance even in these may be enhanced by acquiring other kinds of knowledge and skill. It is becoming less rather than more common to meet academics in the Humanities who possess

the reading knowledge of classical and modern languages of their 19th-century predecessors and their European colleagues.

If the arrangement I am proposing were to succeed, it would be because highly motivated students would be able to bring their much-needed custom to more than one of those departments, such as Classics, Philosophy, or Russian, whose mental demands have brought them into popular and hence official disfavour. In doing so, it would add to the number of those who make up the kind of "educated public" which, as F. R. Leavis put it, "politicians have to fear and respect".⁵ As things are at present, the politicians seem to have frightened if not the public, at least the academics, quite literally out of their minds.

⁵ F. R. Leavis, *Nor Shall My Sword* (1972), p. 183.

AUTHORS

Norman Levine is represented in *The Oxford Book of Canadian Short Stories in English* (1987) and in *86: Best Canadian Short Stories* (Oberon) by stories that were first published in *ENCOUNTER*. Among his other books are *Champagne Barn* (Penguin, original, 1985), *From a Small Town*, and *I Don't Want To Know Anyone Too Well*. "Because of the War" will be the title story of a Dutch selection to be published by Rob van Gennep in April 1989.

Jillian Becker is the Director and co-founder of the Institute for the Study of Terrorism. Among her books are *Hitler's Children: The Story of the Baader-Meinhof Gang* (Michael Joseph and Lippincott, 1977; Panther, 1978; a third edition to be published this spring by Pickwick Books), *The PLO: The Rise and Fall of the Palestine Liberation Army* (Weidenfeld, 1984), and *Terrorism in West Germany* (Institute for the Study of Terrorism, 1988).

Matthew Mead is a poet and translator. He was formerly Editor of *Satis* magazine in Edinburgh, and has featured in the Penguin "Modern Poets" series. He has lived in Germany since 1962.

Elizabeth Jennings's volumes of poems include *Moments of Grace* (1980), *Extending the Territory* (1985), which won the W. H. Smith Award, and *The Sonnets of Michelangelo* (1988). All are published by Carcanet, who in March 1989 will bring out *Tributes*, a volume of collected poems.

D. A. Longley is a Lecturer in History at the University of Aberdeen. A specialist in Russian history, he is currently working on studies of the revolutionary tradition in the Russian Navy and a history of the Russian revolutionary movement, to be published by Cambridge University Press and Edward Arnold respectively.

Vladimir Voinovich was born in 1932 in Dushanbe, the capital of Tadzhikistan in Soviet Central Asia. In 1974 he was expelled from the Union of Soviet writers for his satirical literary works and human rights activity. In 1980 he was forced by the Soviet authorities to leave the USSR, and in 1981 he was deprived of his citizenship. He is the author of *The Life and Extraordinary Adventures of Private Ivan Chonkin*, *Ivankiad*, *Moscow 2042* and a number of other novels, plays and poems. Several literary magazines and publishing houses in the Soviet Union are now planning to publish his work, which has been banned for over 20 years.

Jean-François Revel, the French philosopher and critic, writes a regular column for *Le Point* in Paris. His most recently translated work, *How Democracies Perish*, was published in 1985 by Weidenfeld (London) and Doubleday (New York).

Mark Le Fanu taught English at Downing College, Cambridge, for a number of years. His essays on film have appeared in *The Cambridge Quarterly*, *Sight & Sound*, and *Positif*. He is the author of *The Cinema of Andrei Tarkovsky* (British Film Institute, 1987), and is currently working on a book about Kenji Mizoguchi.

Walter Redfern is a Professor of French Studies at Reading University. He has written books on Paul Nizan, Jean Giono, Raymond Queneau and Georges Darien. He has just finished a book on clichés and neologisms, having previously published a book about puns.

Rüdiger Görner is Lecturer in European Area Studies, Department of Linguistic and International Studies, University of Surrey. His poems, essays and fiction have been published in German, and he contributes to various magazines and radio programmes in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. His study *The Diary in Literature* was published in 1987 by Winkler (Munich) and Artemis (Zurich).

Brian Moeran was appointed to the Chair of Japanese Studies at the University of London in 1986. An anthropologist by profession, he has written extensively on Japanese society and culture. His books include *Okubo Diary: Portrait of a Japanese Valley* (1985) and *Language and Popular Culture in Japan* (1989).

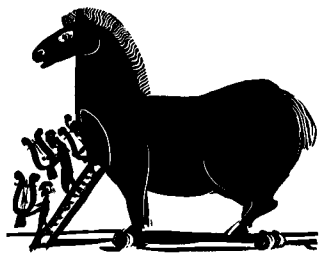
Geoffrey Strickland is Reader in French at the University of Reading, and author of *Stendhal: The Education of a Novelist* (1974) and *Structuralism or Criticism?* (1981), both published by Cambridge University Press. He is at present working on a book (which will be as short as possible), to be entitled *The Selling of the British University*.

Elie Kedourie is Professor of Politics at the University of London and the author of numerous books, including *Islam and the Modern World* (1980), and *The Crossman Confessions and Other Essays in Politics, History and Religion* (Mansell, 1984). His most recent contributions to *ENCOUNTER* are his memoir "On Not Getting a Ph.D." (June 1988), and "Talking about the BBC" (as co-author, September-October 1988).

DISCUSSION

Who Will Translate the Translators?

From Homer to Derrida—By ROY HARRIS



IN A RECENT ISSUE of ENCOUNTER Peter Jones takes me to task for having written an article suggesting that one of the features of the contemporary literary scene is that the traditional concept of translation no longer holds sway, and that this might, in part, explain the remarkable plethora of post-War translations.¹ Jones claims to have disproved this to his own satisfaction by making telephone inquiries to translators of his acquaintance; but I shall not here be concerned with the more Byzantine aspects of his attempts to ape the investigatory methods of the social sciences. What is true is that the article of which Peter Jones complains was rather short on historical background. In what follows, I attempt to put the original suggestion into a more adequate historical perspective.

If the original sin of Western anthropology was speculative history (as Ernest Gellner maintains²), then the original sin of Western literature must have been translation. Since anthropology has always been overwhelmingly dependent on translation anyway, perhaps these two original sins are ultimately one and the same. As early as Plato's *Cratylus* we find some evidence to support this view. Not that the participants in that dialogue even mention translation—but what they do mention, and discuss at some length, are problems of etymology. Nowadays, translation and etymology have migrated to different ends of the linguistic spectrum as refracted by the contemporary academic lens. But this refraction is a modern laboratory illusion. In the end, as in the beginning, the problems of translation and the problems of etymology spring from a single source. It is the notion that linguistic form and linguistic meaning are separable.

ROY HARRIS, Emeritus Professor of General Linguistics, University of Oxford, is an Honorary Fellow of St Edmund Hall. His books include *The Language-Makers* (1980), *The Language Myth* (1981), *The Origin of Writing* (1986), and *Language, Saussure and Wittgenstein* (Routledge, 1988). He contributed a critical survey of the linguistic scene, "Word Wars", to the March 1978 ENCOUNTER. This piece is a reply to Peter Jones's article "Winged Words: On Translating Homer" in the January 1988 ENCOUNTER.

Although original sin of any kind, once committed, is never worth crying over, ritual wailing about translation still passes for literary penance among Western intellectuals. If we wish to trace this curious practice to its historical roots we must first understand the linguistic basis of the traditional translation dilemma in Western culture. It arises essentially from the circumstance that most of the languages of Europe are too close together.

Their proximity is not just the geographical contiguity which linguistic atlases map, nor just the phylogenetic affinity which Comparative Philology belatedly proclaimed in the 19th century. It is, rather, a cognitive proximity (which is something quite different, even though it may have a geographical or a phylogenetic explanation). Symptomatic is the fact that intelligent Romans could think their language was derived from Greek. That is actually more significant in the intellectual history of Europe than Grimm's Law, or Verner's Law, or any of the other phonetic correlations which the 19th-century philologists managed to come up with. It is this cognitive proximity which underwrites the whole rhetoric of the Renaissance—that love-hate relationship with antiquity which glorifies the Classical past while rejecting it.

The traditional translation dilemma is generated by a situation in which languages A, B, C, D, E . . . are related in such a way that, to invoke a photographic metaphor, each seems to be a slightly blurred version of the others. So one is tempted to think of translation as being the requisite verbal adjustment required to bring a text into sharp focus as it passes from one country to the next. The Euroglot community has for centuries been a community of that order, sharing a set of languages all cut to roughly the same cognitive pattern (which Benjamin Lee Whorf later christened "Standard Average European"³). It was the existence of the Standard Average European pattern which made it possible for Dr Zamenhof to invent a slot-machine language like Esperanto,

¹ Peter Jones, "Winged Words: On Translating Homer", ENCOUNTER (January 1988). Roy Harris, "The Ephemerality of Translation", *The Times Literary Supplement* (28 August 1987).

² Ernest Gellner, Introduction to E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *A History of Anthropological Thought* (ed. Singer, 1981).

³ Benjamin Lee Whorf, "The Relation of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language", in *Language, Thought and Reality* (ed. Carroll, 1956).

and still makes it possible for the European tourist to communicate fairly effectively with the natives in any European capital by a crude system of one-to-one word substitutions, based on sentences in the tourist's own tongue. (Where the difficulty comes for the tourist is not in getting the questions across but in understanding the replies.) It was the same Standard Average European pattern which made it possible for Warren Weaver to launch 20th-century machine-translation with the casual observation:

"When I look at an article in Russian, I say: 'This is really written in English, but it has been coded in some strange symbols.'"⁴

TRANSLATION, in this Euroglot context, is inevitably felt to be reducible to a basic process of lexical substitution, plus whatever compensatory morphological and syntactic adjustments are consequential upon it. The translation dilemma is always pictured as a question of how far to go towards or depart from "saying exactly what the original says"—since the one may result in a rendering which is "faithful" but unidiomatic, stilted, inelegant, etc., while the other may result in a version which reads well but is criticised as "unfaithful", loose, inaccurate, etc. The product of this dilemma is translationese.

Translationese may not matter in some cases, or may even be desirable (in certain types of "crib", for instance), but is generally held to be an abomination in the translation of "literature". Exactly why is not often clearly stated, but it presumably has to do with the perceived incongruity of representing a literary work in a form which is manifestly lacking in literary competence.

THE TRANSLATION DILEMMA reinforces and is in turn reinforced by acceptance of a venerable semantic fallacy which goes back certainly as far as Aristotle. Aristotle, at least, states it more clearly and emphatically than his predecessors. It is the fallacy that words are simply vocal labels attached by convention to objects, actions, qualities, etc. in a world which has been given in advance by Nature and is identically conceptualised by all human observers.⁵ Any semantics which takes this Aristotelian premise as its foundational assumption automatically leads to construing translation as being, ideally, a process of swapping one set of vocal labels for another, while "what is said" remains invariant.

Invariance is guaranteeable, at least in the ideal case, because it relates to something outside language which is the same for everybody, regardless of what language or languages they speak. Thus, "Grass is green" is translatable into any language which has a word for grass, a word for green, and can predicatively assign qualities to objects—in short, into any language which has the verbal equipment to express that

mundane fact of Nature about the colour of grass which is obvious to all observers with normal eyesight. On this simplistic account of the matter, translation only gets into difficulties because of adventitious disparities between languages (languages which happen to have no word for grass, no word for green, etc.). But in situations of the Euroglot type this kind of difficulty will not arise very often.

From L. G. Kelly's interesting discussion of St Augustine's remarks on translation,⁶ it appears that an "Aristotelian" conception of the task of the translator was already established in late antiquity. For Augustine it seemed self-evident that you cannot be sure you are translating a term correctly unless you yourself are acquainted with whatever real-world referent the term designates. Otherwise you do not know what the term means.

Augustine gives as an example the term *saraballa*, which occurs in the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the *Book of Daniel*. He says he assumes this to be a term for a head covering, although he cannot be certain since he has never seen the item of dress in question. On the matter of rendering exactly "what the original says", Augustine takes issue with Jerome for translating *sunepodisen* by *impedivit* in Psalm 77. His objections are two: first, the Greek *sun* corresponds to *cum*, not *in*; and second, God's anger did not merely impede, but actually led the Israelites into slavery. On both counts, he argues, *compedivit* is a better translation. Again, he notes that the Greek word *anabathmōn* (referring to the steps leading to the Holy of Holies in the temple of Jerusalem) implies that the steps lead upwards, whereas the Latin *graduum* does not. Here, however, there is simply no Latin word available which says exactly what the Greek word says, and that is a defect in Latin vocabulary.

So, for Augustine, translation is, ideally, not merely a matter of matching words on the basis of their external real-world referents—but, if possible, matching them also on the basis of their internal semantic composition. But, clearly, this ideal would make no sense without the Aristotelian assumption that the same semantic distinctions are, in principle, available to speakers of all languages. (Thus, although Latin *graduum* does not say whether the steps go up or down, this is not because Romans lack the concepts "up" and "down".)

It is only a short step—which Augustine does not take—to arguing that a translator ought to be allowed to coin a morphologically appropriate Latin noun for "step up". That would be flagrant translationese. But it would also be the logical conclusion of Aristotelian translation theory; and in many cases it was roughly what medieval and Renaissance translators later did in order to fill lexical gaps in their own vernacular vocabularies.

TO RETURN, BRIEFLY, to the topic of etymology, the connection hinges on the fact that, as in the case of translation, the underlying assumption is not only that a meaning is something that can be decontextualised and re-embodied in a number of different linguistic forms at different times, but also that there will be at least a partially rational, partially systematic connection between these different embodiments. Otherwise it would be just a joke to ask for the "true" or

⁴ Warren Weaver, "Translation" (1949), in *Machine Translation of Languages* (ed. Locke and Booth, 1955).
Aristotle, *De Interpretatione*, I.

⁶ L. G. Kelly, *The True Interpreter: The History of Translation Theory and Practice in the West* (1979), pp. 8-9.

“original” meaning of a word, and to suppose that by carefully considering the form of the word and its relations to other forms one might discover it.

Although in *Cratylus* Socrates makes a good many jokes at the expense of etymologists, he always stops short of questioning the basic premise that etymological inquiry is valid. The besetting temptation of etymology, for Socrates, is to make up a plausible story when you don’t, in fact, know the answer; but he never suggests either that there is no answer or that, if there were, you could not give it. Analogously, in the case of translation, we are dealing with a semantic hypothesis to the effect that meanings can be “transferred” from one linguistic form to different linguistic forms. You may not always be able to do this successfully, for one reason or another. But, in principle, it can be done. Hence Dr Johnson’s celebrated definition of *translate*: “to change into another language, retaining the sense”. The etymologist’s variety of translationese is to say: “*Anabathmōn* really means ‘up-step’. . . .”

TRANSLATABILITY, on the orthodox Euroglot view, is therefore language-dependent. It is, specifically, dependent on the extent to which the two languages in question approximate the ideal situation of complete structural isomorphism, i.e. exactly corresponding in form and relations. If all languages were structurally isomorphic, there would simply be no translation dilemma.

But since they aren’t—and far from it—the problem areas are totally predictable. For example, traditionally the problematics of translation include the weathered chestnut of how to deal with verse. This problem would not arise if all languages allowed the same rhymes, the same rhythms, the same syllabification, etc. The point here is not that they don’t, which is obvious enough, but that the identification of this as a *problem* speaks volumes about what is *not* seen in the Euroglot perspective as a problem. Translation only begins to get seriously intractable when it runs up against the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign. Otherwise, all is plain sailing (give or take a few idiomatic quirks). Poor translations are the fault of incompetent translators, not a consequence of the inherent unviability of the translational enterprise. After all, if languages *were* structurally isomorphic, then any dullard would presumably be able to translate Racine into such English verse as Alexander Pope might have envied.

Translation is thus (to adapt Frege’s phrase) a constant “fight against languages”.⁷ Given language A and language B, then certain expressions will be “naturally” translatable from one to the other, while other expressions will be “naturally” untranslatable. Which expressions fall into which category is determined in advance by the equipment of the two languages in question. The “art” of translation is basically a matter of finessing the difficulties which arise from the fact that not all languages have all the equipment. The clever translator is someone who manages to make inadequate

equipment look as if it is doing the job: an artist who specialises in verbal *trompe l’oeil* by accommodating “what the original says” to constraints imposed by what a different language *has* to say, and by making the accommodation sound like what a gifted writer in the latter language plausibly *might* have said if expressing “the same thought”.

IT IS THIS deeply entrenched European view of languages and interlinguistic relations which explains the time-honoured disparagement which is the translator’s professional burden. The translator who gets it right gets no credit, because the correct equivalence was already supplied by the language. (One does not congratulate a mathematician on a calculation which can be done simply by looking up the right tables.) On the other hand, the translator who falls short because there was no exact equivalence immediately falls under the rebuke *traduttore traditore*, for having deceived us into supposing that there *was* an equivalence. (Translation is then denigrated as a mathematics which constantly fudges the answers.)

Whichever way it goes, the translator cannot win. Ingenious deceit is designated in advance as the best that can be expected of translation whenever two languages are ill-matched.

That the same old conceptual framework for discussing translation survived more or less intact for so long is a reflection of the fact that for many centuries the cultural demands placed upon translation in Europe were very few. And this in turn reflects the fact that for so long it was Latin which remained both the working *lingua franca* of Western civilisation and, at the same time, its major repository of literary models.

In retrospect, it always seems either ludicrously easy or impossibly difficult to accept that a basic term in our conceptual vocabulary has changed its meaning. There will always be those who accept the change as a foregone conclusion. There will always be others who deny the change as an affront to established values. These quarrels are not empirical issues. If anything, they are etymological. Those most profoundly affected by the etymological consequences are often to be found in the staunch rearguard of those who deny that a change has taken place. For an historically conscious society, the debating of such issues is itself a clear indication that the disputed water is already flowing past the bridge.

The concept “translation” is no more exempt from this process than such key concepts as “religion”, “duty”, “sex”, “nation”, and many more. The ultimate absurdity in a Heracleitian world is to try to check on whether a change has occurred—or is occurring—by putting the question to those professionally involved. One might as well try to verify whether the universe is expanding by photographing an atlas from one week-end to the next. The affidavit “I have never read *Das Kapital*” is not Gallup-poll evidence that the person asked lives an economic life on which Marx has exerted no evolutionary influence.

Suspensions that there might be something deeply flawed in the traditional Euroglot view of translation and translatability do not begin to deepen appreciably until well into the post-

⁷ Gottlob Frege, *Logical Investigations* (trans. Geach and Stoothoff, 1977), p. 13.

Renaissance period. These suspicions emerge as part of that profoundly radical reappraisal of languages which, if we are looking for convenient epigraphic landmarks, we might count as beginning with Herder's definition of thought (long in advance of J. B. Watson) as "*innerlich sprechen*", and as culminating in Saussure's "*dans la langue il n'y a que des différences*".⁸

Herder's definition already turns Aristotle's account of the linguistic sign upside down—but it is Saussure's dictum which drives the final nail into the coffin of European nomenclaturism. Before Saussure it was still possible, while granting the disparity between languages as remote as Chokwe and Chinese, to maintain that no such historical gulf separated the languages of Europe. Between the Mediterranean and the Firth of Forth, so to speak, the old notion of translatability could still be preserved and even flourish. But Saussurean structuralism undermined even that last bastion, and undermined it too deeply for any defensible notion of interlingual equivalence to survive at all. The consequences of this final, systematic sapping have now become part of the history of 20th-century literacy, and in retrospect the results appear to be exactly what one would have predicted. Given the Copernican character of Saussure's linguistic revolution, it was reasonable to expect at least three types of reaction in the field of literary translation.

First, there would be those *literati* for whom the culture-shock was too great. They would therefore cling even more desperately to a traditional approach to translation, being simply unable to make head-or-tail of the business at all without the underpinning of confidence supplied by belief in interlingual equivalences. Translation criticism of this school still survives. A recent example is provided by Peter Jones's comments in *ENCOUNTER* on Martin Hammond's Penguin translation of the *Iliad*.⁹ Here we are taken line by line through Menelaos' speech to the Greeks who are unpardonably slow to take up Hector's challenge to single combat, and Hammond is rapped over the knuckles whenever his English strays too far from Homer's *ipsissima verba*. "Then finally" will not do, according to Jones, because "the Greek says 'after a long time'". "Scorning them to shame" is wrong, because "the Greek says 'abusing them with insults'". "Groaning in the sorrow of his heart" is a mistake, because "the Greek says 'he groaned greatly in his heart'". And so on.

Schoolmasterish ranting of this order is nowadays rather exceptional, but interesting all the same, inasmuch as it is evidently prompted in this instance by a deliberate refusal to entertain the possibility that today the criteria of correct translation might not be what they always had been in the good old days. This is accompanied by a contemptuous

and gratuitous dismissal of doubts on that score as due to a misguided "'social worker' theory of literature". For Jones, all such attempts to undermine the fifth form's confidence in their Classics lessons are clearly subversive. "There is nothing new to be said about translation", he asserts categorically. So back to your grammar books, Smith minor.

Should Smith minor be inclined to protest, Jones deploys the ever powerful pedagogic strategy of ridicule. Smith minor will be invited to stand up and say whether he supposes that *Arma virumque cano* might perhaps be rendered as "'Course it's a bleeding penalty, ref." The class duly laughs, Smith minor is made to look a fool, and order is restored. Translation from the Classics can now proceed as before, soundly anchored to the certitude that chaps like Lewis and Short¹⁰ jolly well knew their Latin after all.

However, it is not only within the walls of such classrooms that we find evidence of a failure to take on board the realisation that talk about "what the Greek says" in English is just nonsense, and consequently affords no coherent basis for translation criticism of any kind. Ironically, even those who recognise the theoretical point about interlingual equivalences sometimes try all the harder to have their translator's cake and eat it.

Whorf himself falls into this Humpty-Dumpty trap. For instance, he evidently sees nothing odd in claiming that what the Nootka sentence *tlil-is-ma* says is not what its English translation "The boat is grounded on the beach" says, but rather "Moving pointwise—on the beach—it is".¹¹ It is merely incidental that the latter happens to be English gibberish, although that gives the example added piquancy.

Whorf seems not to have noticed that what he has done is simply substitute one translation for another. The point is that presupposing the validity of one translation in order to exhibit the inadequacy of another can hardly be a plausible manoeuvre if it is part of an argument to demonstrate the structural anisomorphism, the lack of correspondence, of the languages in question. If Whorf's conclusion is right, his demonstration of it must be wrong. It is rather like trying to convert a sceptic who is not convinced of the incommensurability between British pounds and US dollars by insisting on the fact that whereas in New York you can find quarters, in London you will search in vain for a 25p coin.

SECOND, ONE MIGHT HAVE predicted that there would be *literati* whose reaction to being deprived of interlingual equivalences would be to seek a way forward for literary translation by reaching out for *alternative* equivalences.

This simply leads to alternative nonsense. If Saussure had lived to see the Zukofsky translation of Catullus,¹² he would doubtless have cited it as an example of how to get hold of the wrong end of the structuralist stick. It may well be obvious that in some sense the English words

Minister wet to lee, pour the Falernian

correspond to the Latin

Minister vetuli puer Falerni

⁸ J. G. Herder, *Sämtliche Werke* (ed. Suphan, Berlin, 1877-1913), vol. XXI, p. 88. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale* (2nd. ed., Paris, 1922), p. 166.

⁹ Homer: *The Iliad* (trans. Hammond, 1987).

¹⁰ Charlton Thomas Lewis and Charles Short, compilers of *Harper's Latin Dictionary* (1879).

¹¹ Benjamin Lee Whorf, *Language, Thought and Reality* (ed. Carroll, 1956), p. 236.

¹² *Catullus* (Gai Valeri Catulli Veronensis Liber), translated by Celia and Louis Zukofsky (London: Cape Goliard Press, 1969).

although the exact nature of the correspondence appears to have puzzled commentators. George Steiner describes the Zukofsky translation as “at one level, spinning off puerile acrostics, but . . . at another abusing their source with strategic intent”. The translators, he suggests, “are trying to instance possible procedures for American poetry now and tomorrow and hinting, confusedly, at a theory of immediate universal understanding. . . .”¹³ L. G. Kelly is nearer the mark when he observes that here “meaning is derived from the phonetics of the passage”; and nearer still when pointing out that, whereas translators “traditionally have seen the outer form of language as a vehicle for meaning or content”, here the translators “have reversed priorities and have treated meaning and sense as vehicles for the sound of Catullus’s Latin as they perceive it”.¹⁴ But this still leaves unexplained both why and how such a reversal could lay claim to any validity as *translation*.

It would be patently absurd to suppose that the Zukofsky version is focused upon rendering the Latin sounds *as such* (which would make it a kind of amateurish attempt at International Phonetic Alphabet transcription; or, worse still, an orthoepic leg-pull in the manner of Afferbeck Lauder¹⁵). From a Saussurean point of view, the solution to the conundrum is quite straightforward. Granted that texts in different languages cannot be related in virtue of sharing either *signifiants* or *signifiés*, and granted that conceptual meaning is language-dependent, there is only one basic mode of equivalence which can possibly span the existence of messages in two languages. That mode of equivalence is phonetic, not phonological, and therefore a matter of *parole*, not of *langue*. Phonetics, nevertheless, can interrelate signs as well as sounds. (So an alternative Zukofskian version might read: *Monster! What a lie! Poor felony!*) It follows that the Zukofsky version of Catullus may well be read as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the Euroglot concept of translation; but to cite it as a *reductio ad absurdum* of structuralist theory would be mistaken. In fact, it occupies the only corner of intellectual space which is left, once the notion of translatability is construed as retaining requirements of equivalence, while being deprived of its semantic support in *la langue*.

THE CONTENTIOUSNESS of this interpretation does not invalidate the Zukofsky rendering of Catullus as evidence that something rather shattering has happened in this century to criteria for translation. Nor does it validate the thesis that—aberrations apart—we are still living in the intellectual world of pre-Renaissance times (and therefore must accept pre-Renaissance standards of translation). That two forms of nonsense are siblings legitimises neither. The “aberrations” a culture produces are none the less part of that culture, and may indeed be its most significantly indexical manifestations.

¹³ George Steiner, *After Babel* (1975), p. 352.

¹⁴ L. G. Kelly, *The True Interpreter*, p. 56.

¹⁵ The author of *Let Sialk Strine* (1965), *Nose Tone Unturned* (1967), *Frapply Well Spoken* (1968), and *Frapply Suite* (1969).

¹⁶ Jacques Derrida, *Difference in Translation* (ed. Joseph F. Graham, Cornell University Press, 1985).

¹⁷ Jacques Derrida, Appendix to *Difference in Translation*.

FINALLY, THERE WOULD BE those who sought to redefine translation, not by exploring alternative modes of equivalence, but by insisting on the non-equivalences. This redefinition would start from the structuralist premise that, in the absence of interlingual equivalences, what characterises the relationship between an original text and its translation is, necessarily, a juxtaposition of linguistic *differences*.

The theorist who has most successfully exploited this position in recent years is Jacques Derrida. His is not a compromise position in the sense that it attempts to reconcile the traditional demands of translation with the post-Saussurean recognition that most of these demands are impossible. But it nevertheless acknowledges translation as being (as Joseph Graham puts it¹⁶) “a test of sorts for various claims about language”.

More exactly, it opens a perspective on translation which contrasts with that of “the dominant tradition, which construes the task of the translator in such a way that difference means defeat. . . .” However, far from rejecting the cultural continuity which is constantly appealed to, in vain, by defenders of the dominant tradition, it accepts translation as a form of dialogue within that continuity. (Dialogue, to be sure, even though a Homer cannot answer back *in propria persona*. To suppose that the death of one party automatically puts an end to dialogue would be to confuse dialogue with conversation—yet another manifestation of the long-standing Western tendency to conflate *faits de langue* with *faits de parole*.)

Derrida concludes his punningly titled essay “Des tours de Babel”¹⁷ by posing a brilliantly synoptic question about translatability: “*Comment tradiriez-vous une signature?*” It is neither a rhetorical question nor a final Parthian shot. Nor is it the same question as how to translate a proper name, even though—at least in contemporary Western society—a signature often comprises the inscription of a proper name. (The question of whether proper names are linguistic signs at all, in the sense of belonging to *la langue*, is one of the more moth-eaten *topoi* in modern philosophy of language.)

Derrida’s question strikes at the nexus between theory of language and theory of literature. It goes straight for our cultural jugular. Homer left no signature: but the point here is not that poets in a primary oral culture do not write anyway. The point is that although Homer left no signature, we translate “his” poems as if “he” had. We put “his name” beneath such titles as *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, which we assign to our “translations”. The question is not whether we have any right to do so. Nor is it even whether appending the name “Homer” is itself a kind of translation convention. The question is what the adoption and perpetuation of that practice shows about our conceptualisation of literature and of authorship.

SIGNATURES ARE post-Renaissance Europe’s ultimate guarantees of authenticity. Leases, cheques, paintings, international treaties—all require the autographic squiggle to set the final seal on their genuineness. Inability to sign one’s name is no excuse. A cross will do, provided it is accompanied by some such written gloss as “John Smith, his mark”. In

1770 the chiefs of Easter Island were persuaded to “sign” their agreement to the annexation of their land by the King of Spain. Their pathetic scratches on the annexation document are an outlandish anthropological monument to the European cult of scriptism. One wonders how many more unrecorded examples history conceals of people who “signed away” what was theirs, not only in ignorance of what they were agreeing to, but also in ignorance of what “signing” meant. (Given the fuss we make about signatures, it is quite remarkable how long it took Western philosophy of language to recognise the “performative” as a linguistic art *sui generis*.)

Derrida’s question about the translation of signatures brings into the picture matters which it would take more than

one article and perhaps more than one book to survey. Allusion to that question can here serve only as a timely reminder.

Proclaiming that what counts as correct translation has already been settled once and for all, at least for European literature, by Europe’s great lexicographers may sound like a reassuring reaffirmation of traditional academic standards. Unfortunately, it bears the stamp of an academia whose only hope for the future is that it will be as much as possible like the past. There have always been brands of scholarship which managed to confuse intellectual inquiry with the perpetuation of pedagogic exercises.

It takes scholarship of this kind to fail to see why, in any academic community worth having at all, translatability must rank among the permanently open questions.

The Tunnel

In the half-light the pavement is a tunnel
Flanked by hanging beech trees and a bruised wall,
Leaves keeping passage against the rain which
Rattles the sides like a sea.

A woman without coat or umbrella
Glances behind and, without panic, starts
To jog, her heels clapping through the tunnel
As if it were a real tunnel.

Breathless, she slows to a walk, not looking back
But listening for the distance between
Herself and the man, who is wearing plimsolls
And the rain is deafening.

A gutter spews water like the gargoyle
In the park, its tongue flat out towards her;
Water is seeping through the tunnel roof
Soaking her hair and neck and face.

Beyond the tunnel-end her porch-lamp shines:
In the dark place where she lives, furniture
Sits with stiff arms in silence, waiting like
A father for a daughter.

She cannot understand why the light keeps
Disappearing and will come no closer;
She quickens her step, not now daring
To run or turn her head.

When she falls it is the sudden, rapid
Descent at the moment before waking
With a shout, dry-mouthed, clutching the sheets,
Eyes groping into darkness.

Adrian Blackledge

MEDIA

Reporting Islam

By Elie Kedourie



REPORTING ISLAM for the media came to be increasingly in demand with development both of newspapers and of contacts, political and commercial, between the West and the non-Western world of which Islamic regions form such an extensive and important part. An inspection of, say, the London *Times* in the decades between the Crimean War and World War I yields the impression that this newspaper—and there were a few others like it in Europe—enabled its readers to keep up with, on a regular basis, conditions in Muslim countries. A network of local correspondents sent detailed and frequent despatches and bulletins, not only from the capital city but also from provincial towns and even remote and out-of-the-way places.

Conditions have now quite obviously altered. Even though means of transport have become immeasurably speedier and means of communication instantaneous, information about events in most of the world is much more difficult to obtain. There are many reasons for what can only be called a decline or a regression in the ability of journalists to keep their readers adequately and regularly informed about happenings in the non-Western world, the world of Islam included.

In the first place, political conditions in a great many countries in Asia and Africa, where the great majority of Muslims are to be found, have with the advent of Independence put progressively greater obstacles in the path of newspapermen. Information about current events has become a matter of state, to be manipulated or suppressed in the interest of the rulers. UNESCO's attempt to bring about what is laughably called a "new world information order" indicates the attitude towards journalists and the flow of news from those who now constitute the majority in the United Nations.

In the second place, with the coming of mass literacy, newspaper readership has changed greatly. It is, of course, the case that newspapers depend on literacy. But when literacy was the affair of a minority, it generally went hand-in-hand with a high level of education, and the newspaper audience was one which followed with a great deal of interest—of informed interest—the affairs of foreign countries. Today, a mass readership naturally shows a much narrower and less informed interest in public affairs. Again, the new world-wide electronic media have narrowed horizons even further, since

these media do not even require the preliminary discipline of literacy on the part of their audiences.

In a recently published book by a television journalist who covered events in the Iranian Revolution during 1979 and 1980 for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (*The Man in the Mirror*, 1987), Carole Jerome describes the difficulties of reporting the events then taking place in Iran:

"Each day reporters attempted to simplify and communicate the complex developments to their faraway public. But no simplification could suffice. We felt we were madly flinging pieces of a jigsaw puzzle into the void with every news transmission. But since we didn't have all the pieces in the first place, we could never assemble the picture. . . ."

Why, then, was the picture so fragmentary and chaotic? Of course, no single direct observer of something as complicated as a political upheaval can hope to give more than a cursory idea of what is going on; but, as Miss Jerome shows, the problem was greatly aggravated by the relative unfamiliarity with the Iranian scene of a great many journalists.

"Only one correspondent [she writes] spoke Persian, and few in the press corps were experienced in the internal workings of the Iranian Shi'a mosque. . . . Among the press, even the old Iranian hands were freshmen. The press tends to follow world events in deciding priorities, and Shi'a fundamentalism had not even been on the list when the crisis took shape. Moreover, foreign correspondents can scarcely be expected to speak the language of all the countries they wake up in. There is a basic arrogant assumption that we of the West can quickly grasp the essentials of these exotic boondocks. . . ."

One conclusion which may be drawn from these observations is that the very speed of the modern means of transport has actually impaired the ability of journalists—who can be moved swiftly at the behest of their editors from one spot of the globe to another—to acquire the familiarity with distant and exotic scenes (a familiarity which can come only with time) which will enable them to report authoritatively.

Miss Jerome's account illustrates the well-known modern phenomenon of the medium itself being the message. The media, she remarks, had an insatiable appetite for action:

"If the day had been dull and insufficiently photogenic, television in particular was up a creek—but never without a paddle. 'Well', said one network producer over the phone to the New York desk one night, 'there was only the usual little dust-up at the embassy, but don't worry. We'll make it look like a war.' And with judicious editing, he did.

Television crews and satellite transmissions cost each network upwards of \$100,000 a month from locations like Teheran. And for that kind of money, New York and London want to see something every day. Pressed from all sides, journalists in the field go numb. Typically, this is the way it went as one field producer directed his videotape editor in a hotel suite: 'Okay. Give me ten seconds of Beheshti, a bit of the embassy wallpaper, some of the mobs there, then fifteen seconds of the slaughtering of the camel

in the street. . . . Let's get this thing done. Bird's up in half an hour'. . . ."

Another impediment for the newspaper reader lies in a journalist's sentimental attachment to an exotic political cause, or commitment to a particular policy, either in his own country or the one on which he is reporting. Commitment, for example, was evident in much newspaper reporting of the Viet Nam War, while an example of sentimental attachment impairing judgment is that of J. D. Bourchier, the Balkans correspondent of the London *Times* before World War I. Bourchier's partiality for Bulgarians and dislike of Turks made impossible the impersonality, detachment, and distance which the good reporter has to maintain, above all in distant and exotic places. His name, the official *History of the Times* approvingly declares, "will have a permanent place in the history of Slav liberation. . . ." Praise of this kind a journalist must strive to avoid.

The difficulty of reporting Islam does not arise only from the character of the contemporary media and their audience. Muslims and Muslim societies show a great variety of circumstances and behaviour, each of which requires to be distinguished from the others. The means to distinguish between them have to be acquired through historical study as well as by the practical political acumen which characterises journalism at its best.

There are today over 800 million Muslims in the world, living mainly in Asia and Africa. Their overwhelming majority in fact is to be found in Asia; but not in the Middle East, the birth-place of Islam and the area naturally and popularly associated with it. The largest Muslim state is Indonesia where there are about 140 million, constituting 90% of the population. Indonesia is followed by Pakistan where its 90 million Muslims form 97% of the population, and Bangladesh with about 80 million, constituting 85% of the inhabitants. A moment's reflection will lead us to conclude that these three countries are very different indeed in point of tradition, contemporary outlook, problems, interests, international connections and styles of international activity.

What is true of these three very large states is equally true of smaller, but still very substantial states: Turkey with its 48 million or Egypt with 40 million. And just as true of very small states: Saudi Arabia with its 5 million or the United Emirates with its 200,000. All these predominantly Muslim countries are sovereign states able to play their part on the international stage, and are far from taking for granted the assumptions underlying intercourse between states, the product of Western political traditions, which were for so long accepted. Such a state of affairs was unknown before 1945. Previous to that date almost all these countries, as indeed most other Muslim areas, were dependencies of European Powers and unable to make their voice heard, or bring their weight to bear in international affairs. If the USSR be counted as a European Power, then it is the only one which still rules over a sizeable population of Muslims—some 45 million. In addition, two non-European and non-Muslim Powers, India and China, rule over substantial numbers of Muslims: 75 and 20 million respectively.

All this is to say that the problem of reporting Islam is

much more complicated, and the pitfalls for journalists much more numerous than when these vast and populous areas were governed from European metropolitan centres whose outlook and political activities were much more accessible and familiar. Adequately reporting Islam today involves, then, great difficulties arising out of what might be called the highly polycentric character of both the society of states and of the Muslim component thereof.

ARE THERE, however, any characteristics or problems which all Muslim societies and states share in one way or another? I can think of at least two, which are related to one another. From its very beginnings Islam was both a religion and a polity. Muhammad was "the Messenger of God" transmitting a divine revelation to mankind; but he became, in Medina, the governor of the new, small community of Muslims and their leader in politics and war. The institution of the Caliphate, which became established after the death of the Prophet and was the highest public office in Islam, was in consonance with what had come to characterise the original polity in Medina. It was, and remained to the end, a religio-political office attending to the affairs of the Muslim community, safeguarding the Faith and protecting it from its enemies. The Caliph, i.e. the successor of the Prophet, also bore the title of *Imam*, leader in prayer, and *Amir al-mu'minin*, Commander of the Faithful, the title *Imam* denoting the religious character of the office, and *Amir almu'minin* indicating that he was the supreme military commander of the *umma*, the community of the faithful.

There was, then, from the very beginning a tight connection between Church and State, if we may use, simply by way of analogy, terms originating in, and applicable to the Christian world. In course of time, the Caliphate devolved, among Sunni Muslims in the Middle East, on the Ottoman House. In 1924, shortly after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, the Grand National Assembly abolished the Ottoman Caliphate. Attempts to have another Muslim ruler declared Caliph in the 1920s and '30s failed. It became clear that the Muslim world, now divided among many sovereign states, could not agree on a successor to the Ottoman holder of the Caliphate; nor was this surprising, since the Caliphate was not a purely religious office like the modern Papacy. In the political theory of Islam, the Caliph was equivalent to what, in the Western vocabulary of politics, is termed a *sovereign*—the holder of political authority and military power. The political theory of Islam has found it difficult, up to the present, to devise a substitute for this central and fundamental notion.

The reason why the Turkish Grand National Assembly abolished the Caliphate was that it—together with the founder of the Turkish Republic—believed that, if Turkey was to become a modern, prosperous, and powerful state, there should be a separation between State and Religion: in other words that what is known as the *laïc* principle should be one of the bases of the new Republic, just as the separation of Church and State had come to be a widely accepted principle in European constitutions. This separation has remained a fundamental feature of successive Turkish consti-

tutions. There is only one other Muslim state where the *laïc* principle obtains, namely Indonesia. Elsewhere Islam, explicitly or implicitly, must be the religion of the state or of its head. This is so, even if, as in Baathist-ruled Syria and Iraq, the constitution of the ruling party lays it down (Article 15) that the “‘national tie’ is the only tie that may exist in the Arab state.”

But if secularism is, as in Turkey and Indonesia, a prominent feature of the constitution—or if, on the other hand, Islam is accepted, explicitly or implicitly, as the official religion of the state, or the religion which its head has necessarily to profess—it remains the case that here is an issue which Islamic political thought, in its engagement with the modern world, has yet to settle. In those countries where secularism has been officially adopted, the vast bulk of the population remains strongly attached to Islamic traditions and beliefs. Among these beliefs, not the least important is that religion and rule should be one, so that there is great tension, hitherto quite unresolved, between the beliefs of the mass and the official doctrine of the state. Islamic political thought, in other words, has not yet developed an analogue to the Western idea of a free church in a free state.

One has to remember, of course, that political thought and political practice are not identical. In practice, all kinds of compromises and accommodations tend to be made which would serve to diminish the frictions and antagonisms between an Islamic and a Western way of life, and between Islamic ideals and those which the numerous Westernised members of Muslim societies now want to live by. But such practical accommodations must remain precarious so long as they are not legitimised by an Islamic political theory which has behind it the consensus of both religious leaders and ordinary believers.

Take, as an example, Iran. After World War I, a modernising and Westernising ruler, Reza Khan, who became Shah in 1925, was able to continue disregarding the Islamic provisions of the Constitution of 1906 which remained theoretically in force, but which had been in practice from the very beginning disregarded. These provisions empowered a board of divines to rule on whether legislation conformed to the laws of Islam—and, if not, to veto their enactment. Reza Shah’s son, Muhammed Reza, who succeeded to the throne in 1941, continued and extended his father’s policies. But Muhammad Reza Shah was toppled from his throne at the beginning of 1979 by a hitherto obscure man of religion who, moreover, had been an exile for the previous fifteen years. The régime which followed the Shah’s rejected, abjured, and condemned as un-Islamic the policies of modernisation and Westernisation which had been relentlessly followed for more than half-a-century. Such policies did not succeed in attracting the loyalty of the people or the assent of the divines.

The régime which succeeded that of the Shah, led by Ayatollah Khomeini, is widely described as “fundamentalist”. This term, adopted from the vocabulary of Christian theology, is meant to denote that Khomeini’s movement constitutes a call for the restoration of pristine Islamic values—as these had been articulated at the time of the Prophet and his immediate successors. The justification for such a demand was that these values had ensured for Muslims power and

prosperity, which had directly flowed from obedience to the divine commands. What Khomeini and other fundamentalists before him have argued is that Muslims began to lose power to the benefit of unbelievers, to become poor and weak, purely as a result of having abandoned their God-given values, of having ceased to heed the divine commands.

FUNDAMENTALISM as a current of thought, a cluster of attitudes, and often an organised movement is, then, the second phenomenon which is spread across the whole Muslim world, and is obviously related to, is the obverse of, modernisation and Westernisation. From the very beginning of modernising policies, whether simply advocated by Muslim thinkers or actively pursued and enforced by rulers, there were voices raised to warn Muslims that Westernisation was entirely the wrong path to take. In the 20th century, decades after Egyptian thinkers and rulers had put Egypt on such a path, there appeared in the 1930s a movement which propounded essentially the same ideas as Khomeini was later on to embrace—namely, that the only salvation lay in return to the Koran, the teachings of the Prophet, his way of life and that of his immediate successors. This movement, that of the Muslim Brethren, has attracted a very large number of followers and has played a striking, though hitherto unsuccessful, role in Egyptian politics. Offshoots of the movement are to be found in Syria, in Jordan, in Israeli-occupied Gaza and West Bank, and in the Sudan. Their following in these areas has also been large, and their political impact equally noticeable. Similar movements, also predating Khomeini’s appearance, are to be found in Pakistan where their programme was officially adopted by the régime headed by the late President Zia ul-Haq. Again, in the Afghan resistance to Soviet occupation and the Soviet-backed Communist régime, fundamentalist parties, inspired both by the Muslim Brethren and by the Pakistani fundamentalists, are prominent. Similarly, in both Malaysia and Indonesia fundamentalist movements have obtained a hold, albeit not as powerful as in Egypt or Pakistan.

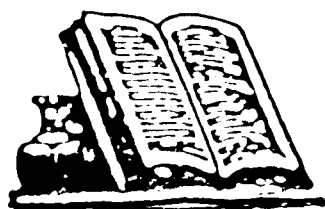
These two phenomena, of Westernisation and accommodation with it, on the one hand, and rejectionist fundamentalism on the other, are to be seen all over the world of Islam. Their respective strengths vary from area to area, and have their ups-and-downs over time.

If one is reporting Islam, it is on these two related movements that one ought to keep an eye. Not of course exclusively, since, as has been argued, each Muslim country has its own particular traditions and its own specific history to be studied and borne in mind. But the ebb and flow of fundamentalism and its opposing ideas—antagonists in symbiotic relation to one another—is one which repays constant attention. Not the least interesting issue is how fundamentalists can pursue their aims without contamination from the Western ideas and techniques which they undoubtedly need in order to protect and maintain themselves. Conversely, how can the Westerners accommodate Islam—since without such accommodation, Westernisation may find itself in difficulties and, as happened in Iran, perhaps even fail.

IN THE MARGIN

Between East & West

By Anthony Hartley



FIRST "SAMIZDAT" and then "Charter 88"—is there never to be an end to the British Left's attempt to attract prestige to themselves by an identification with the more risky activities of Russian or Czech

dissidents? The aim of such enterprises, in so far as they have political meaning, is to assist the formation of a Lib-Lab coalition which, by unifying the forces opposed to Mrs Thatcher's government, can break its seemingly durable hold on the voters, but the patrons of this idea have chosen a singularly indirect route to their objective. Anyone who wants a written British constitution will presumably have to wait till the cows come home, and, since no opposition party leader seems to be in favour of anything of the kind, the operation is unlikely to have much success. However, it may continue to provide fodder for political journalists and occasion for deliciously conspiratorial meetings for some time to come.

As for the implication, present in the references to East European conditions, that we all live in a Britain increasingly subject to the fear and oppression usually found in a totalitarian state, Dr Julius Toman, a signatory of the Czech intellectuals' "Charter 77", said what was necessary when he remarked that the adoption of the name was "cheap". He went on: "People here are not oppressed. They are not yet speaking from within some really threatened right."¹

All this seems to be more a product of political frustration than a true perception of Britain today. In media nightmares, no doubt, gallant BBC producers struggle against a merciless bureaucracy, and investigative journalists are dragged screaming from the typewriter by the minions of MI5. But the martyrs of the media will soon wake up and find themselves at home in bed, free to pursue their unhampered careers. They need no *samizdats* or charters to provide what they already have: a good deal of licence to call the quick and the dead over the coals.

The iron rule of Mrs Thatcher apart, it is curious that Brit-

ish intellectuals in a spectrum ranging from what was once the Alliance to *Marxism Today* should have chosen to identify themselves with the East European intelligentsia's resistance to tyranny. It is a powerful, if backhanded, tribute to the Russian and Czech dissidents that the very mention of them should be taken to conjure up ideas of freedom and the rule of law.

Such admiration is natural enough. These are men who have suffered for what they believe; it is their close encounters with totalitarianism that give their liberal opinions a strength such views can hardly possess in countries where they have become a cliché. In the West what is called "liberalism" has too often been associated with the soul-searchings and indecision of a cultured élite. A lack of self-confidence, the inability to say boo to a goose—these are the patterns of behaviour that the word "liberal" brings to mind—probably unfairly. In Eastern Europe things are different. Those who have fought for the more robust liberalism of Mill and Tocqueville have said boo to kites and vultures. Their image is that of men ready to fight and, if necessary, die. Of course, we take them seriously. Of course, the word "democracy" on their lips has a different ring from when it is used in, say, a speech from the rostrum at a meeting of the National Union of Students.

Will this living example of fighting liberalism have its effect on us? Can we expect from Eastern Europe a renewal of political sincerity that will find its echo in the West? Political protest—manifestos, leaflets, demonstrations—takes on reality in as much as it is addressed to real evils. It loses significance when trotted out for one trivial complaint after another. The word "hungry" can be used to describe a well-fed individual who has missed his lunch or a starving peasant in the Sahel. But there is little doubt which of these two cases infuses more genuine meaning into it.

IN THE YEARS to come Eastern Europe's intellectual output will affect the West in many ways. This cultural invasion began with clandestine writings. A Kundera or a Solzhenitsyn had all the more impact in that their works came to us painfully and at long intervals. Now the volume of writing from the East is growing, and, as well as novelists and poets, we shall be able to read historians and philosophers writing as they must have written for themselves and a trusted student or two, without the protective camouflage of an assumed Marxism. Soon we shall have a better knowledge of the intellectual vitality seething beneath the surface of Communist orthodoxy.

As these new ideas and alien experiences reach us, what shall we make of them? "Human kind", wrote Eliot, "cannot bear too much reality", and it may be that the flood of testimony from Eastern Europe will confuse and baffle us as much as it stimulates. The years that were necessary to absorb, say, Dostoevsky into the mental world of Western Europe should warn us against possible misunderstandings. How many of those who read Solzhenitsyn have the faintest idea of what his beliefs imply? The millennium of the Russian Orthodox Church was reported as though the Patriarch Pimen

¹ See *The Daily Telegraph*, 5 December 88. It is fair to add that the drafters of "Charter 88" recognise this point: "Conditions here are so much better than in Eastern Europe as to bear no comparison." But in that case why adopt a name which invites one?

was a slightly more traditional version of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Years ago I came across a series of "Phil-Hellenic" plates in an antique shop in Paris and should have bought them instantly. Alas! they were gone next day. On one of them was painted a scene memorably described as "The virgins of Samothrace interposing their breasts before the bayonets of the savage invaders" (i.e. the Turks). Such exotic images made up the 19th century's view of wars of liberation: Byron at Missolonghi, the Bulgarians being massacred by Bashibazouks, Garibaldi and his Red Shirts, the Austrian General Haynau whipping Magyar women and, subsequently, being chased around the streets of London by Whitbread's draymen. But these exciting pictures had little to do with the reality of the political situations in question. Byron was none too keen on many of the Greek patriots when he came to meet them, and the mind boggles at a possible encounter between Gladstone and a Bulgarian *komitadji*.

Our own judgments are likely to suffer from similar misunderstandings when we survey what is going on in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe today. One of the most obvious features of the scene is a clash of resurgent nationalisms, whose explosive symptoms are beginning to appear all over the Balkans as well as in the Soviet republics. The Serbs appear to be on the brink of provoking an Albanian insurrection in the region of Kosovo; Romanians are outraging Hungarians by the demolition of their Transylvanian villages; Bulgars are oppressing Turks in the south-east of that country. So the old 19th-century dance goes on. As for the Soviet Union, in addition to the dispute between Armenians and Azerbaijanis, nationalism is flaring in the Baltic republics, in Georgia and in the Muslim areas of the country.

IT IS SOMETHING of an irony that, whereas in the West we tend to regard our own national feelings as somewhat archaic and out-dated, we should welcome nationalism in Eastern Europe as a sign of vitality and rediscovered identity. In Poland or in Hungary national feeling gave the peoples of those countries something to cling to during years of oppression and misery. None the less, incidents like the struggle over Nagorno-Karabakh cost innocent lives, and the fierce antagonisms now once again manifesting themselves all over Eastern Europe, as the pressure from the Soviet Union lightens, could kindle fires that it would be difficult to put out. The gap between Eastern and Western Europe is particularly wide when it comes to the intensity with which a country's cause is sustained. The remark of a BBC official during the Falklands War that he was not "in the patriotism business" would

not be understood in Moscow or in Warsaw. In Western Europe we can take our country's identity for granted until someone rouses the patriot in us. In Eastern Europe 19th-century nationalism, as well as 19th-century liberalism, is alive and kicking.

IN THESE DAYS of "interdependence" and "supranational authority" it is as well not to forget the strength of the bonds that have been forged, over the centuries, between peoples and their habits of government. Nations, after all, are not kept in existence by rational calculations of advantage, but by shared historical experience and an emotional attachment to tradition. A country is a sentimental entity, and it is dangerous, in Burke's words, to consider it as "nothing but a *carte-blanche*, upon which a man may scribble whatever he pleases". To tamper with the roots of national identity may produce a sudden and violent reaction. But this is hardly a conclusion which the signatories of "Charter 88" will draw from their study of Eastern Europe. Evidently they are inveterate scribblers.

If we are to compare our lot with that of the peoples of Eastern Europe, we must be aware how appalling their historical experience is—even set alongside our own memories of two world wars. How are Russian intellectuals to come to terms with what went on under Stalin? In Western Europe only the regressive barbarism of Nazi Germany poses this problem of interpretation.² So far, the official version is that what happened was the fault of a mad and bad dictator; sooner or later it will have to be admitted that Lenin created the apparatus of repression which Stalin used. The 250,000 corpses newly discovered in one of five mass graves near Minsk in White Russia—the only one to be opened so far—do indeed require some historical explanation. Previous Russian rulers had been harsh and brutal, and one at least (Ivan the Terrible) a maniac. But what happened in the Soviet Union cannot be explained in terms of one man's character, important though this may have been. The most irrelevant view on this is that of Trotsky. It was the Revolution, tainted from the start, which intensified many of the worst tendencies in Russian history. Russians must now rethink their history. To do so will be extraordinarily painful—one of those "extreme experiences" around which Dostoevsky based his novels, a torture for the soul, a knife in the heart.

It is this heavy past which separates Western from Eastern Europe, admire its culture and its dissidents as we may. It is this too which makes the evocation of their experience by the signatories of "Charter 88" or the editors of *Samizdat* less than appropriate. Only by a powerful effort of imagination can we understand what the Soviet Union and the states that border it have suffered. If we can make that effort, we shall be left speechless with pity and terror. Then, as the Bible puts it, we should be silent for half an hour. It is no theme for the chattering classes.

² Professor Ernst Nolte has got himself into trouble in Germany by comparing Stalin's atrocities with Hitler's. Perhaps they were both so utterly appalling that there is little point in setting one against the other. What can be said is that the standards of civilisation in Germany had previously been so high that the depth of National Socialist regression came as an unparalleled shock.

LETTERS

Philosopher of "Hope"

J. P. STERN'S altogether justified demythologising of Ernst Bloch on "hope" ("Philosopher of 'Hope'", ENCOUNTER, July-August 1988) recalls the fuller, more positive, yet finally even more devastating critique of Bloch by Josef Pieper in *Hope and History* (Burns & Oates, 1969). Before Bloch, Pieper had already published his penetrating treatise *On Hope* (1935, Eng. trans. 1986) and Bloch from the start was criticised bitterly by his fellow German Marxists for getting involved in a religious theme. Better than anyone, Pieper appreciated the majesty of Bloch's theme, which shines even through its disfigurement by ideological bias.

Pieper also solved a problem that evidently baffles Stern: how can one authentically hope for what is certain? Bloch's error—slightly but significantly different—lay in thinking that we can really hope for what is within our power and for what we shall inevitably achieve through our own resources. But Pieper and Stern are both right to deride Bloch's hapless correlation of that age-old symbol of hope, "Jerusalem", with Moscow and Lenin. *Ubi Bloch, ibi illusio*.

B. F. MEYER

McMaster University
Canada

Serbian-Albanian Conflict

I READ with much interest the article "Nationalism as Disease and Cure", subtitled "The Albanians in Yugoslavia", written by Anton Logoreci (ENCOUNTER, July-August 1988). The author discusses, on the face of it, the problem of nationalism in the modern world, but does not suggest any cure. I am prompted to add some comments to his article, for very important reasons.

While facts quoted by the author are unquestionable, the article is more remarkable for the facts omitted. Mr Logoreci is correct in citing, at the beginning of his article, the repression of Kosovo Albanians between March 1981 and May 1986. The only point he omits is that since 1966 the government, police and judiciary have been in the hands of the Albanians. Most of the Albanians imprisoned since the outbreak of disorders in 1981 were condemned by Albanian judges. It may be

concluded that the demonstrations and subsequent subversion were not motivated by foreign (allegedly Serb or federal oppression) but by other objectives.

MR LOGORECI completely ignores the fact that since 1966 thousands of criminal offences have been committed by the Albanians against the Serbs—murder, rape, physical injury, arson, destruction of property and livestock. Since the disorders of 1981 the press has been allowed to report incidents, but what happened previously is unknown. We do know that since 1966 about 200,000 Serbs have had to abandon their homes in Kosovo under duress, and to emigrate to other parts of Yugoslavia.

Mr Logoreci states that the Albanians living in Kosovo first experienced a spell of national and cultural freedom under Italian and German occupation from 1941 to 1944—which is both paradoxical and wrong. What about Albanians in Albania, did they share the same fate?

All Albanians were originally Christians. However, after the Turkish conquest in the 15th century, the great majority became Muslim, while the Serbs, Macedonians, and Greeks remained Christian. As Turkey was a religious and not national state, Muslim Albanians became fully-fledged citizens, enjoying all rights—exemption from taxes, the right to bear arms and to own big feudal estates—while the Christians were the deprived population, subject to heavy taxation and, of course, unarmed. The Albanians felt the Muslim culture and civilisation to be their own, and many of them occupied the highest positions in the Turkish army and administration. It is therefore grossly misleading to pretend that the Albanians in Kosovo experienced for the first time national and cultural freedom only under Italian and German occupation.

Mr Logoreci also refers to "old hostility between Serbs and Macedonians aggravated by civil war". This assertion is untrue. There was no hostility between the Serbs and Macedonians during the civil war and the present relations between them are confident and very friendly, as all students of Yugoslav affairs will know. But there is serious conflict between the Macedonians and the Albanians.

I read also the following lines: "As the group which had suffered most under Serbian rule, the Albanians. . . ." Why does Mr Logoreci not tell us what the Serbs suffered under Ottoman and Albanian rule until 1912? He may quote some impartial sources, like consular reports and foreign writers. Why does he not tell us that during World War II many Albanians joined Italian and Ger-

many Albanians joined Italian and German armed forces, and even a full SS division? They committed atrocious crimes against the Serbian and Montenegrin population in Kosovo. He does mention, however, that Albania, which could count on sympathy from Kosovo Albanians, sided with Stalin against Yugoslavia in 1948. Is it surprising that the authorities exercised a tight grip over this border region?

Mr Logoreci is right when he says that the Albanian population was poor and uneducated until the first part of this century. But, whose fault is it? Albanians emerged as a primitive, underdeveloped ethnic group at the end of the Ottoman empire, like the rest of the population living under Turkish rule. They were loyal subjects of the empire throughout, while the Serbs and the Greeks won their freedom at the beginning of the 19th century, and consequently made substantial economic and cultural progress.

Mr Logoreci rightly quotes in conclusion that "the true state of relations among the nationalities was never frankly discussed and little effort was made to inform either the Serbs or the Albanians of the legitimate interests of . . . the other community".

The true state of relations between them is war, which has lasted for several centuries. Even the Serbs, except this writer, are reluctant to recognise it.

Having achieved complete national emancipation and obtained home rule under a Serbian "republic" in Yugoslavia, the Albanians had the opportunity to end the secular war. They did not.

M. VASIC

Belgium

Logoreci Replies

M. VASIC says that in my article ("Nationalism, as Disease and Cure", ENCOUNTER, July-August 1988) I discuss the problem of nationalism but suggest no cure. He is, of course, right. My whole purpose was to describe, not to prescribe. I have tried in particular to describe and analyse the treatment of the problem of nationalism by the Soviet and Yugoslav Communist leaders during the past 50 years or so. It would have taken far more than one article to deal, for instance, with the highly complex history of Serbian-Albanian relations to which he refers.

The Communist parties of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and other countries promised to solve the problem of nationalism with a magic wand once and for all. It's self-evident that they have done no such thing. Political and cultural repression, coupled with the phoney doctrines of "proletarian internationalism" and "brotherhood and unity",

have merely suffocated and buried the problem.

When Vasic writes that the many Albanians of Yugoslavia who have been imprisoned since 1981 have been dealt with by policemen and judges of their own national group, he seems to be under the illusion that Yugoslavia has existed in a political and ideological vacuum since the end of World War II. It's common knowledge that the country has been ruled by a self-elected Communist régime, whose bureaucracy is packed at every level by party members—all beneficiaries of the system of appointments known as *nomenklatura*. Therefore, Serbian, Croat, Slovene or Albanian bureaucrats, policemen and judges are mainly concerned with the execution of the policies of the Communist party, without much regard for the real wishes and interests of the people over whom they rule.

Under Mikhail Gorbachov's leadership, the Soviets have been willing to admit for the first time that the Communist system has failed in several spheres, including that of nationalism. So far the Yugoslav Communist leaders have shown no such willingness.

ANTON LOGORECI

London

Hello to Euphoria

IN A lengthy and rambling autobiographical article ("A Farewell to Utopia", *ENCOUNTER*, April 1988), Joseph Epstein describes his gradual shedding of Leftist views. I do not want to take issue with his liberal credentials, such as being the director of the Anti-Poverty Programme in Little Rock, Arkansas, in the early 1960s, nor with his ruminating questions about what he would have done had he been faced with the draft during the Viet Nam War, and his insinuations that those who did not serve now have misgivings or bad consciences (the Viet Nam Guilt) about having let the working class do the fighting. For many people the questions he posed were not rhetorical, but let that be. (Okay, I didn't fight. I spent four years in the South Bronx and Harlem as a teacher, fulfilling a form of alternative service. I feel no guilt about not having fought and what I did.)

No, what fascinates me about his *Commentary* conversion, or Hook Slide—so named after the Jewish liberal magazine turned neoconservative, and the famous ex-Marxist Sidney Hook, now the doyen at the Hoover Institute in California—is the sense of epiphany in the description. Granted that there was no instant revelation: "nothing dramatic—no falling star, no shaft of sunlight on the forest floor, no weekend

Letters

spent staring at the ocean—caused me to shed what I now think the political illusions of earlier years." Rather, it is the feeling after the shedding, the feeling of having an enormous burden lifted, that calls my attention:

"... after dropping my Leftism, I feel the world has become a more interesting place—and I mean the world as it is. . . . Shedding my Left-wing views has left me much happier, without, so far as I can see, making anyone else in the world more miserable. . . ."

But life has not been all roses and optimism for Mr Epstein since his conversion. For although he says that "surely the whole point of being on the Left is that one is dissatisfied with the world as it is and ardently desires to change it", he does admit that "I have no strong impulse to reform it, outside those pockets of alterable injustice and organised cruelty".

Pockets? Does he mean pockets like Burundi or Cambodia? Or, perhaps he is referring to the Iraqi gassing of the Kurds? No, let's talk about the millions of poor, homeless, illiterate in his own country. Do they live in pockets? Are they a pocket? I refrain from inquiring about his use of strong impulse instead of impulse, and what he means by alterable injustice and organised cruelty. Are some injustices unalterable? What about unorganised cruelty? What has Mr Epstein found as "a greater subject of fascination"?

Mr Epstein has not put on rose-coloured glasses. For the moment, he is only wearing tinted bifocals, he is only half-converted. The key to his dilemma, how I know that he is hesitating before taking the final plunge, is evidenced by his statement: "I haven't the least hint how to bring this [reform] about". The problem of effective reform is not just his problem, but *the* problem of the post-Great Society generation. That's what Dukakis' managerial hype was all about. Programmes failed in the 1960s. Money was wasted. Do failure and waste mean that the impetus behind the programmes was wrong? That the goals that they sought to achieve were wrong? Or that the problems they tried to solve have disappeared?

WHAT IS MOST disconcerting about Mr Epstein's statement comes when he speaks of reform, and says: "I am not sure I would if I could". He concludes the paragraph by stating (proudly, I assume): "I haven't a utopian idea in my head."

Now that Mr Epstein has shed his "furry blinkers" of the Left, there is danger in his new-found high. His guiltless euphoria is actually the beginning of the shedding of responsibility. We

feel guilt when we fail to live up to some expectation. If there is no expectation, if there is no sense of responsibility for self or others, there can be no guilt. When Mr Epstein says that "Old Left-wing methods of bringing about this alleviation [of suffering] are worthless", he is trying to convince himself that his position is tenable.

The methods are worthless. So? Suffering has not been alleviated. So? Change the methods. Will the new ones work? I don't know, and he doesn't either. Only utopians believe that final solutions are possible. Others, like perhaps the civil rights workers in the South whom he admired, tried their best, try their best. Peace by pieces, Ernst Haas wrote. Instead of looking for Truth, seek truths, advised Kenneth Boulding.

Why? Because that's the world as it really is. Not only the world of suffering and injustice, but the world of suffering and injustice *and* those who try to alleviate them. Perhaps people will not succeed, but that's part of man's fate, both to suffer and to try to alleviate the suffering. That is the euphoria of life, the lightness of being: to try. The *ought*, Mr Epstein, is not divorced from the *is*. The *ought* is part of the *is*, as Hegel argued. And, we might add, the *is* is part of the *ought*, since *ought* implies can, and can is inextricably intertwined with *is*.

DANIEL WARNER

Geneva

Rope of an Argument

MELVIN J. LASKY refers, in his "Ideas of '68" (*ENCOUNTER*, November 1988), to what German sociologists call *Seilschaft*, a mountaineering term used as a metaphor to indicate an "old-boy network", or how the '68 generation managed, after twenty years, to help themselves into positions of power and influence in Western élite groups (press, government, education, etc.).

The *Seilschaft* calls up the image of climbers, roped to each other, and mutually supportive. It is, I think, a very good coinage of Professor Erwin Scheuch of the University of Cologne.

But I would only like to add that here in the actual mountain country I have often heard American and British alpinists use, as an English word, "*abseilen*". So maybe the concept has a future. Give sociologists enough rope and their arguments will hang together.

GUSTAV BERGLER

Villars-sur-Ollon

Life & Letters Today



London
CARELESS DRIVING? A man who drove for 40 miles without realising he had mislaid his wife at a motorway service station was cited yesterday as a classic example of "holiday trance"

experienced by many peak-season travellers.

The forgetful motorist only discovered he had left his spouse behind when he turned to ask her to pass him a mint and found she was not there.

"This illustrates how drivers can fall into a trance and lose touch with what is around them. The consequences are not always so amusing. . . ."

said the quarterly road safety bulletin issued by West Yorkshire police.

The distraught woman and her absent-minded husband, who had stopped at the service station to answer a call of nature, were reunited when both contacted police. The bulletin does not record the scene which followed.

The road safety pamphlet highlights the case as a consequence of the frustrations and strains placed upon holiday motorists.

"Many people begin their holidays with a long journey. A break can make the whole experience more pleasant. But when you move off do not forget to check that you have everything back in the car and everyone."

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Holland
WILD RICE: The Dutch Army has never seemed a home for terribly aggressive people, judging by those photographs one remembers of long-haired, pot-smoking soldiers with peace badges on their uniforms. Many of them, it seems, do not hold with killing animals, let alone people: the Defence Ministry has now introduced vegetarian battlefield rations.

To be fair [Raymond Whittaker writes] the military authorities insist that this is to accommodate the increasing number of Hindus and Muslims serving in the Dutch armed forces, but they drew the line recently when a Muslim soldier went absent without leave for a month to observe the feast of Ramadan.

All the same, their forces can hardly inspire much terror in the breasts of the Warsaw Pact, any more than the group I once saw advertising for members, Gay Vegetarians Against the Nazis, can have had fascists quaking in their beds.

THE INDEPENDENT

London
WRIGHTS & WRONGS: Following last summer's story about the new, parodic Egypto-Corinthian Sainsbury's do-it-yourself store in west London, budding architectural commentators throughout Britain have been turning their minds to the problem of devising a term to describe the officially preferred style of the stores.

There were numerous puns on the decorative theme, including Hut Deco . . . Mart Deco . . . Art Depot . . . Art Checko . . . and Art DIYco. Terms which incorporated the patrons of the style were also popular, including Insanaburysm.

The expert panel was also taken by Low-Brauhaus and Basic DIY-abolical.

But the winner, cleverly paying homage to one of the great founding fathers of modern architecture, and provid-

ing a penetrating analysis of the Sainsbury's aesthetic and its impact on the environment had to be . . . **Frank Loud Wrong.**

SUNDAY TIMES

Dartmouth College, USA
IDENTITY CRISES: Did I [Flora Lewis writes] apply for a Rhodes scholarship to Oxford when I was in an American college? They were astonished at now coeducational Dartmouth when I said that no women were accepted in my time. Here, one of the first women admitted to the faculty only began teaching 20 years ago.

The word "coeducation" should be considered obsolete. It is just education. Why are males at US colleges "students" and females "coeds"?

Three young women in a row interviewed me for local media. Each wanted to know, "What is it like to be a woman journalist?" They did not mean, what is it like to be a woman. They know. Do they ask men, "What is it like to be a man journalist"?

NEW YORK TIMES

New Jersey
STATIONS OF THE CROSS: Five nuns of Morris Township, New Jersey, have barricaded themselves in the infirmary of their convent in protest at the introduction of television and newspapers into their cloistered lives.

The nuns, all members of The Most Blessed Virgin Mary of Mt Carmel, fled from their rooms last Tuesday and locked themselves in the infirmary. "Our aim is to seek God's face at all times, not to watch television", said Sister John of the Cross in a telephone conversation from their cramped quarters.

A television set, video-cassette recorder, newspapers and snacks between meals had eroded the atmosphere of "contemplative prayer", Sister John said, adding that she feared the nuns' defiance of Mother Teresa Hewitt's "modernistic policies" could bring their eviction from the 62-year-old convent. The nuns have asked Mother Teresa of Calcutta to appeal to the Pope on their behalf.

REUTER



Hamburg
AMOEBIIC WORDS: What is language coming to? Social scientists here argue [Siegmar Schelling writes] that nobody starts a revolution anymore by occupying the railway stations and the telegraph offices. Revolutions start nowadays by taking over the language, by seizing all the concepts. The first step to power is to become master of the universe of discourse.

Everyday speech is revealing. What does all the talk amount to of "Problem . . . Structure . . . Relevant . . . Development . . . Function"?

Some call these buzz-words, which serve to reduce meanings to the lowest common denominator which fast approaches zero. The words express little or nothing at all but manage to sound like the vocabulary of competence. They soon give way to multiple others.

One thinks of the amoeba, a microscopic fissionable creature which lives as a parasite and has no fixed shape or form.

DIE WELT AM SONNTAG



Artistic Riches

The Petrine Revolution in Russian Architecture

JAMES CRACRAFT

Peter the Great, with his vision and openness to European ideas, set his stamp on every aspect of Russian culture—most lastingly in his revolutionizing of Russian architecture. In this splendidly illustrated book, James Cracraft shows how the building style we now associate with Russia came into being, paying particular attention to the planning and architectural glories of what was St. Petersburg. Many previously unpublished photographs are included.

1 color plate, 204 halftones, 12 line drawings

The Mosaic Decoration of San Marco, Venice

OTTO DEMUS Edited by Herbert L. Kessler

Demus's acclaimed four-volume work, *The Mosaics of San Marco in Venice*, was the culmination of his lifetime study of the exquisite mosaics whose restoration he supervised. John Julius Norwich hailed it in the *New York Times Book Review* as "a superbly produced work of majestic scholarship." Here now, abridged for a wider audience, is a one-volume distillation of that magnificent achievement. 90 color plates, 89 halftones

The School of Prague

Painting at the Court of Rudolf II

THOMAS DACOSTA KAUFMANN

In a masterful reassessment of Renaissance art theory and practice, Kaufmann reveals the importance of the painting done under patronage of Rudolf II (1552–1612). This beautifully illustrated catalogue raisonné of the works produced at his court traces their influence on European art in general and shows the way in which Dutch seventeenth-century art, in particular, developed its naturalistic style from the "mannerist" art of Rudolfiner Prague. "A very good guide to one of the high cultural moments of central Europe."

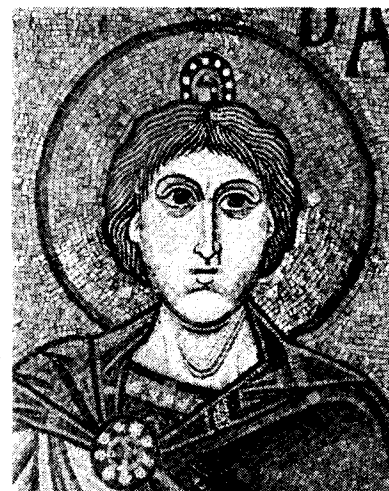
—John Russell, *New York Times Book Review*

16 color plates, 494 halftones 9" x 12"

Winner of the 1988 Mitchell Prize for the History of Art

For information on these or on any of the thousands of our other books in print, write to:

5801 Ellis Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60637, U.S.A.



National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC

Absorption and Theatricality

Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot

MICHAEL FRIED

With this work, Fried transformed the way in which eighteenth-century French painting and its criticisms are viewed and understood. He discovers a new emphasis in the art of the period 1753–1781, one based not on style or subject matter but on values and effects, particularly the effect of a human figure absorbed in an activity in denial of an audience. "An exhilarating book."—John Barrell, *London Review of Books* 70 halftones

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS